Influential Relationship between Workplace Incivility and Employee Alienation of Construction Companies in Rivers State

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Abstract	Original Research Article

This study examined the relationship between workplace incivility and employee alienation in construction companies in Rivers State. The study adapted: Rudeness and bullying as dimensions of workplace incivility (predictor variable) while valuelessness and self-estrangement are the measures of employee alienation (criterion variable). The study was premised on the assumptions of Karl Marx's theory of alienation the study has a population size of 369 with sample size of 171 staff drawn from 8 construction companies in Rivers State. The study adopted quantitative data type with the questionnaire as the only instrument for data collection. The result of the study revealed workplace incivility as a predictor of employee alienation. Hence, the following measures were recommended: Management of construction companies should develop and enforce comprehensive rudeness policies that outline what constitutes rudeness, reporting procedures, and consequences for violators., Management of construction companies should conduct regular, mandatory training sessions on rudeness prevention and workplace conduct for all employees., Management of construction companies should create and implement a zero-tolerance approach of bullying., Management of construction companies should foster collaboration and camaraderie through structured activities that improve trust and reduce alienation.

Keywords: Employee, Incivility, Workplace, Construction.

Background of the study

The construction industry is characterized by tight deadlines, hierarchical supervision, frequent subcontracting and high physical and psychosocial risks. These features create fertile ground for interpersonal mistreatment and strained worker–management relations, which can harm safety, productivity and employee well-being (contextually important for the Niger Delta / Rivers State construction sector). Empirical work on workplace incivility and employee alienation in Rivers State's construction sector is limited, and existing local studies focus more on contract and safety issues than on interpersonal mistreatment and psychological alienation, leaving an empirical gap this study addresses

Saari (2015) defined employee alienation as a state which describe an employee detachment

from his or her job as a result of dissatisfaction in the work. To Saari alienation it's a negative feature of a demotivated employee, if not given adequate attention could transcend to total detachment from work. This definition therefore holds same stance with the holy bible, proverbs chapter 18 verse 1, which states that one who isolated himself seeks his own desires. He rejects all sound judgment.

Richard Schacht (2014) sees alienation as an experience of separation, from a person, object, or social situation. Brian Baxter (2010) has noted that 'to be alienated from something presupposes the existence of an opposite state of non-alienation. Allison (2009) posits that alienation is linked to ethics because it describes an actual existential situation and resulting to a future action condition in general, a specific individual's way of being. Work alienation entails a sense of incomprehensibility among workers about their work role, the means to accomplish the role, the future course of action, and the contribution of the work to a larger purpose (Chiaburu 2013).

Employees affected by work alienation are most likely to be counterproductive in their organizations as they usually do fail to satisfy and fulfill their main needs and expectations from work (Banai et al., 2014).

On the other, in the last two decades, incivility has emerged as a focal topic in the human resource literature. Several studies have investigated how various uncivil behaviours influence employees. The intentionality of incivility is more difficult to discern and ascertain. Workplace incivility is ubiquitous with diverse reasons and personal justifications. It has been estimated that 98 percent of workers experience incivility, with 50 percent experiencing such conduct at least weekly (Porath & Pearson, 2023). Leadership incivility refers to unacceptable behaviour put up by leaders in the workplace (Andersson & Pearson, 2019). Uncivil behaviours are usual in the workplace (Milam et al 2019; Pearson & Porath, 2022).

Workplace incivility is a pervasive and costly behaviour that only quite recently has become the topic of empirical research. So far, research on the antecedents and broad consequences of incivility as a whole has not been integrated in a narrative review. Leadership incivility is not restricted to one geographic area but is a phenomenon that occurs worldwide and has negative consequences across the world. It is indeed an emerging challenge for many organizations in this new globalized era. Workplace incivility refers to the extent to which a leader engages in uncivil behaviour. Modern organizations have witnessed an inflating rate of incivility affecting organizational behaviour across all sector. Yet, the workplaces in which employees come into interaction with each other on a regular basis are considered as the most heavenly places for incivility behaviour.

Previous studies have sought to address the issue of workplace incivility and its influence on employee alienation (Hart, 2019). However, there exist a paucity of literature on its effect and manifestation within construction companies in Rivers State (Ladebo, 2020). While previous studies focused more on the leadership incivility in public organizations such as workplace incivility and organizational learning (Bernhard, 2021), workplace incivility with intention to quit (Griffin, 2010),work place incivility and employees satisfaction (Lim & Lee, 2021), effects of work place incivility on mental and physical health (Lim et al., 2018), work family conflict (Lim & Lee, 2021), incivility and absenteeism (Clegg, 2023), behavioural incivility and leadership style (Baig and Zaid 2015), supervisors' incivility and workplace alienation (Higwe, 2019), sexual harassment and work alienation (Hart, 2019), deviant behaviour and workplace alienation (Akani, 2019). However, knowledge about workplace incivility and its prevalence in construction companies is relatively lacking. In other words, little has been done with regards to examining the relationship between workplace incivility and employee alienation in construction companies in Rivers hence a gap; in order to fill in this knowledge gap therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship between workplace incivility and employee alienation in construction companies in Rivers State under the contextual influence of organizational culture.

Statement of the Problem

Workplace incivility; low-intensity, rude or discourteous behaviour that violates norms of mutual respect is increasingly recognised as a common psychosocial hazard in organisations and a precursor to more severe forms of mistreatment. Incivility produces measurable declines in wellbeing and workplace functioning and can escalate into bullying, reduced trust, and counterproductive behaviour.

In the construction industry, where work is physically demanding, deadline-driven, and often organized in hierarchical crews, interpersonal friction and informal rule-breaking are common; studies of building and construction workers in Nigeria indicate notable prevalence of workplace mistreatment and bullying that undermines safety, cooperation, and job outcomes. These industry characteristics plausibly increase the risk that everyday incivility becomes chronic and consequential.

Despite evidence that incivility harms employee wellbeing and that alienation (particularly self-estrangement and valuelessness) undermines work outcomes, there is limited empirical research linking everyday workplace incivility to specific dimensions of employee alienation within construction firms in Rivers State. It is not known (a) how frequently construction workers in Rivers State experience uncivil behaviours from supervisors, peers, or clients; (b) the extent to which such incivility predicts increased self-estrangement (e.g., "I feel I'm working only for pay and not myself") and perceived valuelessness/meaninglessness of work; and (c) whether these alienation dimensions mediate relationships between incivility and key organizational outcomes (safety compliance, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and productivity). This empirical gap matters because construction firms in Rivers State operate in high-risk, teamwork-dependent environments where alienation-driven disengagement could worsen safety and project performance.

Conceptual Framework of workplace incivility and employee alienation

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between workplace incivility and employee alienation in construction companies, Rivers state. However, the specific objectives are:

1. To determine the relationship between rudeness and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State.

2. To determine the relationship between rudeness and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State

3. To determine the relationship between bullying and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State.

4. To determine the relationship between bullying and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following questions drafted from the objective of the study were used as our research questions

1. What is the relationship between rudeness and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State?

2. What is the relationship between rudeness and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State?

3. What is the relationship between bullying and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State?

4. What is the relationship between bullying and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are used in this work.

H_{O1}: There is no significant relationship between rudeness and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State.

H_{O2}: There is no significant relationship between rudeness and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State.

H_{O3}: There is no significant relationship between bullying and valuelessness in construction companies in Rivers State.

H_{O4}: There is no significant relationship between bullying and self-estrangement in construction companies in Rivers State.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility refers to a low-intensity deviant behaviour that violates norms for mutual respect with ambiguous intent to harm the target, as a reflection of the social exchange relationships that develop among organization members (Andersson & Pearson, 2019). SET suggests that interpersonal interactions are guided by an underlying norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 2020). Uncivilized behaviour is interactive since uncivil behaviours from the instigator(s) would cause attitudinal or behavioural changes in the target(s) (Cortina et al., 2013). Those targets may experience boredom, loneliness, and frustration at work (Gallus et al., 2014), which could trace back to the reduction of working motivation and enthusiasm and, in the worst case, resulting in a regression within the workforce (Woo & Kim, 2020)

Important definitional elements of workplace incivility that help to differentiate it from other negative interpersonal workplace behavioural constructs are its low intensity (aggression, violence, and bullying are more severe) and its ambiguous (rather than overt or clearly diagnosable) intent to harm. Examples of uncivil behaviour include talking down to others, making demeaning remarks, and not listening to somebody (Porath & Pearson, 2019). According to Wachs (2019) Incivility creates disturbance in the organizational environment and causes aggression among the employees. Today incivility is prevalent in organizations more than ever before. The more common type of uncivil behaviours may involve bullying, harassment ignoring a co-worker, being derogatory and indifferent to workers' opinions. Incivility is at the low end of the workplace mistreatment continuum but when it will be overlooked it may result in deteriorating the conditions in the organization (Felblinger, 2018).

Dimensions of Workplace Incivility

Rudeness

Rudeness is generally defined as a display of disrespect, a breaking of social norms or expectations, a breach of etiquette, or ignoring "accepted" behaviour. It can also mean someone behaving inconsiderately, aggressively or deliberately offensively. Rudeness is defined as workplace behaviour perceived to be insensitive or disrespectful (Lim & Teo 2019; Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner 2021). It is a low-intensity antisocial behaviour which lacks a clear intent to harm (Andersson and Pearson, 2019), in that it may or may not be intentional, but nonetheless violates social norms and is perceived as rude by the target (Cortina, 2018). Rudeness, which can also be referred to as incivility (Porath and Erez, 2017), can compromise the well-being of organizations as well as the commitment of its members, and

carries with it adverse social, attitudinal, and behavioural consequences (Giacalone, Riordan & Rosenfeld, 1997; Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly & Collins 2018; O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin & Glew, 2016). Despite the serious- ness of its impact, and growing interest in the topic, research up to this point has mostly focused on understanding it through surveys and laboratory studies (Miron-Spektor et al., 2011; Porath and Pearson 2010; Taylor, Bedeian, and Kluemper 2022), which arguably, provides an important, albeit incomplete, baseline for understanding the subtleties of employees' encounters with rude behaviour at work.

The word "accepted" is important, because rudeness can mean different things to different people, or within different organizations or environments. For example, shouting and swearing might be considered normal in a busy restaurant kitchen, but it would be regarded as wholly inappropriate and unacceptable in most offices. Rude behaviour at work can have very real consequences. People who experience workplace rudeness, for example, report lower engagement, suffer more mental and physical health problems, and are more likely to burn out and quit their jobs (Kent, 2020). Nearly all of us are affected by rudeness and other types of workplace misbehaviour, like interrupting and exclusion

Rudeness can be a way to display power within a team or organizational relationship, to try to get your own way on something, or simply to provoke a reaction. It can also be a response to stress, pressure or frustration. How you treat your people can impact the way that they treat others. If they see that their managers or leaders get away with rude behaviour, they may copy it. You can prevent rudeness from spreading by setting a good example to them. Highlights the positive traits that you should demonstrate to your team, such as empathy, integrity, professionalism, and self-control. If you ignore rude behaviour, you send out a signal that, in effect, you condone it. If you witness it, or if it's brought to your attention, you need to deal with it. We look at how to do that, below. When you need to address rudeness, talk to the offender somewhere private. Stay calm and objective as you outline the facts as you know them, explain the negative impact of his or her behaviour and how it made other people feel, and make it clear how you want him to modify his behaviour. The offender may think that she had good reason to be annoyed with somebody, and her rudeness was just a reaction to that. So, while making it clear that her behaviour was unacceptable, give her an opportunity to explain what triggered it. Active listening and emotional intelligence can help one to understand reasons behind rude behaviour while looking for solution to avert its spread.

Rude behaviour can be particularly devastating for small business. In a large organization, managers can isolate the source, keep the disrespect contained to one team or building, and then try to address it. But in a small business, where everyone knows and interacts with everyone else, a rude employee's behaviour can spread throughout the entire organization.

Bullying

Bullying is a deliberate and repetitive form of aggressive behavior in which an individual or group intentionally seeks to harm, intimidate, or exert power over another person perceived as vulnerable (Olweus, 2013). It typically involves an imbalance of power (whether physical, social, or psychological) between the perpetrator and the victim, making it difficult for the target to defend themselves (Hymel & Swearer, 2015). Workplace bullying is a persistent pattern of hostile, intimidating, or demeaning behavior directed toward an employee (or group of employees) that creates a work environment characterized by fear, humiliation, and distress.

Researchers emphasize that bullying is not a one-off conflict or isolated incident but a pattern of behavior that can have long-term negative effects on both the victim and the perpetrator, such as anxiety, depression, reduced self-esteem, and poor social adjustment (Rigby, 2020). In workplace contexts, bullying can lower productivity, increase absenteeism, and foster a toxic organizational culture (Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). In essence, bullying is both a social and psychological problem, shaped by individual characteristics,

peer dynamics, and broader environmental factors, requiring preventive and corrective interventions at multiple levels (Espelage & Holt, 2013).

Workplace incivility refers to low-intensity deviant behaviors that violate norms of mutual respect in the workplace, often ambiguous in intent to harm but capable of undermining an individual's dignity and work performance (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). Within its spectrum, workplace bullying stands out as a severe and more sustained manifestation of incivility. While incivility may be occasional or subtle, bullying involves repeated, persistent, and targeted hostile behaviors aimed at undermining, intimidating, or humiliating an employee (Einarsen et al., 2011).

Workplace bullying encompasses behaviors such as verbal abuse, deliberate work sabotage, excessive criticism, gossiping, withholding critical information, or socially excluding a person (Hoel & Cooper, 2000). Unlike one-off rude acts, bullying is systematic and prolonged, often lasting weeks, months, or even years, thereby creating a hostile work environment (Leymann, 1996). Such patterns of behavior go beyond interpersonal rudeness to include power imbalances, where the perpetrator uses positional, informational, or social power to victimize the target (Namie & Namie, 2011).

From a theoretical standpoint, workplace bullying can be seen as the escalated form of workplace incivility along a "continuum of aggression" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The incivility spiral begins with subtle disrespect such as dismissive gestures or curt remarks but, if unchecked, can intensify into overt aggression and bullying. Bullying thus represents a high-intensity, high-frequency point on this continuum, where the target experiences sustained negative acts that severely affect their psychological safety and job satisfaction (Hershcovis, 2011).

The impacts of workplace bullying are profound, including emotional distress, reduced self-esteem, burnout, absenteeism, and even physical illness (Hoel et al., 2003). On the organizational level, it erodes trust, increases turnover, and damages team cohesion. Bullying can also fuel a toxic culture where incivility becomes normalized, leading to higher organizational conflict and reduced productivity (Salin, 2003).

In construction companies, for example, bullying may manifest through supervisors deliberately overloading subordinates with impossible deadlines, ridiculing their mistakes in public, or withholding critical safety information; actions that compromise not only employee well-being but also operational safety (Lingard et al., 2010). Verbal abuse, exclusion/isolation, and Threats/Intimidation are the indicators of bullying as used in this work.

Concept of Employee Alienation

Alienation is related to the despair and loneliness of the individual as a result of his social and cultural distance from his close environment. In general, the concept of alienation can be defined as the decrease in the harmony of the individual with his social, cultural and natural environment and especially the decrease in his control over his immediate environment, causing loneliness and hopelessness (Kongar, 1979). Literally, alienation refers to the alienation of individuals from themselves and a particular environment or a process. Alienation can be defined as a feeling of alienation from other people, from society and its values, and from the self, particularly those parts of the self that attach itself to others and to society in general. According to Fromm, alienation is the most serious problem of modern times (Fromm, 2014). An alienated person is unhappy and tries to save time; however, he also has a desire to kill the time he is trying to save. Although alienation is caused by social factors, it occurs within the person. Groups that think or are thought to be alienated from the society suffer either from not being able to realize their individual qualities or from not being allowed to exhibit these qualities even though they are in line with the social value system. Signs of alienation; alienation, indifference, inability to be deeply attached to anything, not attached to work, withdrawal, disconnection in relationships and isolation (Erjem, 2005).

Alienation implies the experience of separation,

from a person, object, or social situation. Perhaps the most profound level of alienation is estrangement from one's self. The modem individual's experience of 'self' can range from a sound sense of clear personal identity, meaningful purpose, and committed involvement in work and social life to the loss of self and state of in authenticity, futility, discontent, depersonalization, or dissociation. The term alienation in that sense refers to the relation that forms between an individual and himself, the individual and his relation with others, with nature, and with human work. To BinZahi (2017) the sensations of helplessness, isolation, lack of standards and being lost are the most prevailing feelings in our world. Add to that the vague perspective of the future, the lack of belonging and alienation are results of the changing world that we are living in. To Ceylan and Sulu (2011), work alienation is viewed as a multidimensional idea. However, two principal measurements of work alienation are considered: powerlessness and meaninglessness. People who show symptoms of alienation will often reject loved ones or society. They may also show feelings of distance and estrangement, including from their own emotions.

Alienation' has had a long and varied life in terms of both its history and the ways it has been understood. While it emanates from, and was used in, the religious dis-course to discuss the Fall of Man, its use has not been confined to this discourse. It is a concept that has taken on a variety of different meanings in a variety of different discourses. Richard Schacht (1994) has identified three historical uses of the concept a legal meaning based on the exchange of property; a psychological meaning relating to a form of mental illness; and an ontological meaning that 'refers to a condition of separation or estrangement from someone or something other than oneself, with which one once was or ideally should be united'. However, the ambiguity of, and confusion over, the meaning of the concept led Martin Bronfenbrenner (1973) to reject it as nothing more than 'noise'. For him, the different usages of the concept demonstrate that it does not actually describe anything. It is simply a fashionable concept that lacks precision or real legitimacy. As such, it does not and cannot help us to understand human existence. We should not talk of alienation anymore; we should lay it to rest and find alternative concepts to describe the variety of phenomena that the concept 'alienation' has been used to describe. In agreement,

Shantz et al (2015) noted that there are many drivers for work alienation but the most apparent are (Variety, Autonomy, Social relationship, and task identity) while Ali, Rasheed and Hussain (2015) reported almost the same drivers as Shantz with minor differences including (decision making autonomy, task variety, task identity and social support). On the other hand, Amirkhani and Safikhani (2015) found out that the physical, mental and emotional abilities of an individual are the main drivers of work alienation, the more the work suits a person the less likely it is for them to feel alienated from their job. However, many researchers appeared to be adhered to the set of drivers which were presented by Shantz et al (2015) which included Variety, Autonomy, Social relationship, and task identity including (Banai & Reisel, 2003; (Chiaburu, *et al.* 2013; O'Donohue & Nelson, 2014). In that since, task variety refers to the degree of the task variation that is found within the job description of an individual, as for the Autonomy ir refers to the unity of the orders and decisions sources, while task identity refers to the nature of the work that the individual is doing and the Social relationship refers to the social interaction that takes place between the individual an people around them at work.

Hoy, *et al.* (2013) view work alienation as a reflection of the employee's disappointment about his/her status within the organization. Estrangement from work may be defined in relation to an individual finding work-related developments meaningless due to organizational and environmental conditions, feeling one's self to be inefficient and powerless, isolating one's self from the work place and colleagues, and as a result, developing negative attitudes towards work (Elma, 2013). Başaran (2018) states that an employee's estrangement from the organization is the most unwanted of his/her attitudes towards the organization. Başaran, who says

that Karl Marx was the first to have used work alienation, defines it as an employee's view of their work as unrelated to his/ her efforts. Durkheim (1976) viewed alienation as the consequence of a condition of anomie, or 'the perceived lack of socially approved means and norms to guide one's behaviour for the purpose of achieving culturally prescribed goals.

Measures of Employee Alienation

Valuelessness

Valuelessness refers to employees' perception of their own work as worthless with reference to the strategic goals of the organization (Sarros et al., 2022). The feeling of "Why am I bothering to do this?" strikes people the instant a meaningless moment arises, and it strikes people hard. Valuelessness refers to employees' perception of their own work as worthless with reference to the strategic goals of the organization (Sarros et al., 2022). Valuelessness refers to the individual's sense of understanding of the events in which he or she is engaged (Seeman, 2016). According to him valuelessness originates from low expectancy of satisfactory predictions about future outcomes of behaviour. It also means been unable to see meaning in actions, in relationship rather having a sense that life has no purpose. Workers get a feeling of meaninglessness they are not able to understand the complex system of goals in the organization and its relationship to their own work" (Kanungo, 2022). An employee is considered of exhibiting valuelessness when he considers events around them to be meaningless. They get the feeling that they're excluded from activities in the organization and they regard themselves as isolated from the environment. Employees with such feelings misinterpret the activities and events around them (Başaran, 2018).

The feeling of "Why am I bothering to do this?" strikes people the instant a meaningless moment arises, and it strikes people hard. What factors serve to destroy the fragile sense of meaningfulness that individuals find in their work? Interestingly, the factors that seem to drive a sense of valuelessness and futility around work were very different from those associated with meaningfulness. The

experiences that actively led people to ask, "Why am I doing this?" were generally a function of how people were treated by managers and leaders. Interviewees noted seven things that leaders did to create a feeling of valuelessness (listed in order from most to least grievous). Although individuals did not talk much about value congruence as a promoter of meaningfulness, they often talked about disconnection between their own values and those of their employer or work group as the major cause of a sense of futility and valuelessness. This issue was raised most frequently as a source of meaninglessness in work. A recurring theme was the tension between an organizational focus on the bottom line and the individual's focus on the quality or professionalism of work. One stonemason commented that he found the organization's focus on cost "deeply depressing (Sarros et al., 2022).

Lack of recognition for hard work by organizational leaders was frequently cited as invoking a feeling of pointlessness. Academics talked about department heads who didn't acknowledge their research or teaching successes; sales assistants and priests talked of bosses who did not thank them for taking on additional work. A stonemason described the way managers would not even say "good morning" to him, and lawyers described how, despite putting in extremely long hours, they were still criticized for not moving through their work quickly enough (Başaran, 2018). Feeling unrecognized, unacknowledged, and unappreciated by line or senior managers was often cited in the interviews as a major reason people found their work pointless.

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Lack of recognition for hard work by organizational leaders was frequently cited as invoking a feeling of meaninglessness. Meaninglessness refers to the individual's sense of understanding of the events in which he or she is engaged. In the work setting, meaninglessness may occur "when workers are not able to understand the complex system of goals in the organization and its relationship to their own work" (Kanungo, 2022).

Valuelessness is characterized by a low expectancy that satisfactory predictions about the future outcomes of behaviour can be made." Whereas powerlessness refers to the sensed ability to control outcomes, this refers to the sensed ability to predict outcomes. In this respect, Geyer (2016) believes meaninglessness should be reinterpreted for postmodern times: "With the accelerating throughput of information meaningless is not a matter anymore of whether one can assign meaning to incoming information, but of whether one can develop adequate new scanning mechanisms to gather the goal-relevant information one needs, as well as more efficient selection procedures to prevent being overburdened by the information one does not need, but is bombarded with on a regular basis. Information overload or the so-called "data tsunami" are well-known information problems confronting contemporary man, and Geyer thus argues that meaninglessness is turned on its head. Hollowness, depression and boredom are the indicators of valuelessness.

Self-Estrangement

Self-estrangement is the idea conceived by Karl Marx self-estrangement is "the alienation of man's essence, man's loss of objectivity and his loss of realness as self-discovery, manifestation of his nature, objectification and realization". Self-estrangement is when a person feels alienated from others and society as a whole. A person may feel alienated by his work by not feeling like he has meaning to his work, therefore losing their sense of self at the work place. Self-estrangement contributes to burnout at work and a lot of psychological stress. Self-estrangement in workers manifests in feelings of working just for a salary, doing one's job just to get it out of the way, or doing work to please others.

Self-estrangement in workers manifests in feelings of working just for a salary, doing one's job just to get it out of the way, or doing work to please others. Although self-estrangement is a small factor, it still contributes to alienation, which contributes strongly to burnout at work. Self-estrangement may provoke different forms of psychic distress that potentially evoke symptoms of burnout, or manifestations of stress that ruin work life. Self-estrangement and lack of meaning in one's work provokes a different form of psychic distress that evokes symptoms of burnout. According to Marx's theory of alienation, a worker can feel self-estranged from their work, their production, and other workers. This means that the person loses interest in why they are working, which can decrease their production and cause them to alienate themselves from other workers as well. The worker doesn't feel like he is a part of the workplace, therefore isolating himself from his work and others.

Estrangement was defined as the perception of the self as an alien instrument of another, and "the loss of intrinsic meaning or pride in work…One way to state such a meaning is to see alienation as the degree of dependence of the given behaviour upon anticipated future rewards, that is, upon rewards that lie outside the activity itself" (Seeman, 1959). In addition, estrangement was the lack of an "intrinsically rewarding activity". While Seeman (1971) admitted the term was vague, the operational continued to be used in alienational

Blauner (2014) opined that any work in which the individual was unable to fully express the "unique abilities, potentialities, or personality"

could contribute to self-estrangement. Self-estrangement was not limited. The indicators of self-estrangement discussed in this work are sadness, burnt out, and disgust.

Theoretical framework of the study

This study is premised under the assumption of Karl Marx's Theory of Alienation, the theory describes the estrangement of people from aspects of their human nature (*Gattungswesen*, 'species-essence') as a consequence of the division of labor and living in a society of stratified social classes. The alienation from the self is a consequence of being a mechanistic part of a social class, the condition of which estranges a person from their humanity. Karl Marx's theory of Alienation suggests that workers get alienated from their species under capitalism, to the point that we cannot function according to our species-being, we are alienated from our existence. The capitalistic society does not profit the working class rather only the bourgeoisie class. It can be seen everywhere in the world how alienation as an experience and exploitation affect the mental health of the working class.

Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Given the widespread and highly dispersed nature of construction firms within Nigeria, this study narrowed its investigation to an accessible population of 369 permanent staff of the main branches of the construction companies.

Association between Rudeness and Employee Alienation

H0₃: There is no significant relationship between Rudeness and valuelessness.

H0₄: There is no significant relationship between Rudeness and self-estrangement

Table 4.16: Correlation Matrix for Rudeness and Employee Alienation

			Rudeness	Valuelessness	Self-Estrangement
Spearman's rho	Rudeness	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.269*	.428**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.038	.001
		N	171	171	171
	Valuelessness	Correlation Coefficient	.269*	1.000	.366**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	.	.004
		N	171	171	171
	Self-Estrangement	Correlation Coefficient	.428**	.366**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.004	.
		N	171	171	171

Source: SPSS Research Data, 2025

The results in table 4.16 indicate that there is a significant relationship between Rudeness and valuelessness (r = 0.269, p = 0.038 < 0.05). Rudeness is significantly associated to self-estrangement (r = .428, p = 0.001 < 0.05). The association between Rudeness and two measures of employee alienation; valuelessness and self-estrangement is found as significant at 0.05 level of significance. Going by this result, hypotheses three and four were rejected at .05 alpha level. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between Rudeness and Employee alienation.

Association between Intimidation and Employee Alienation

H0₅: There is no significant relationship

between bullying and valuelessness.

H0$_6$: There is no significant relationship

between bullying and self-estrangement

Correlation Matrix for Bullying and Employee Alienation

			Bullying	Valuelessness	Self-Estrangement
Spearman's rho	Intimidation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.431**	.319*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.013
		N	171	171	171
	Valuelessness	Correlation Coefficient	.431**	1.000	.366**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.004
		N	171	171	171
	Self-estrangement	Correlation Coefficient	.319*	.366**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.004	.
		N	171	171	171

Source: SPSS Research Data, 2025

The results in table 4.17 indicate that there is a significant relationship between bullying and valuelessness; bullying and self-estrangement. Bullying is significantly correlated to valuelessness (r = 0.431, p = 0.001 < 0.01). Also, bullying is also significantly associated to self-estrangement (r =0. 319, p = 0.013 < 0.05). The relationship between bullying and the measures of employee alienation is found as significant and positive at the level of 0.05 significance. Going by this result, hypotheses five and six presumes the existence of a significant relationship between bullying and employee alienation.

Discussion of Findings

Rudeness and Employee Alienation

The result of the Spearman Rank Order Correlation in table 4.16 shows the presence of a significant relationship between rudeness and two dimensions of employee alienation (valuelessness and self-estrangement) rude behaviour crosses all lines from coworkers who do not like each other to bosses who exhibit rude behaviour. A growing number of studies suggest that the presence or absence of rudeness at work is a key indicator of an organization's potential to shift toward the high or low end of

the effectiveness bar. Rudeness is at the low end of the continuum of workplace abuse. Workplace rudeness isn't violence or harassment or even open conflict, although it can build up to any of those things. Some experts attribute rude behaviour to interpersonal conflicts. Behaviour that one person may perceive as cold, brusque or rude, another may view as a no-nonsense, competent, or efficient manner. Workers of different cultures or backgrounds may react very differently to the same behaviour. Thus, as the workplace becomes more diverse, the potential for misunderstandings or unintended offenses may multiply (Buggs, 2018).

Bad managers tend to infect their departments with bad attitudes. It is like a disease: they spread despair, anger and depression, which show up in lackluster work, absenteeism, and turnover. Situations that foster this behaviour include downsizings, pay freezes, or other financial crises. The emphasis is often on get-tough turnaround and, as such, higher-ups often turn a blind eye to crude management tactics as long as the numbers are good (Flynn, 2019) In fact, one out of five employees is verbally harassed at work by a manager (Oldham, 2019).

Bullying and Employee Alienation

The result of the Spearman Rank Order Correlation in table 4.17 shows the presence of a significant relationship between bullying and employee alienation. The boss humiliates you in a meeting before your co-workers. Your secretary gossips about you in the lunchroom spreading rumors about calls you receive. Your co-worker deliberately withholds crucial information that you needed to successfully complete a project. All of these are forms of intimidation at workplace, which is itself one of several types of incivility in workplace. Workplace bullyinghas been described as low-intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. The increase in workplace incivility has cost organizations by negatively impacting human capital and organizations' bottom line (Andersson & Pearson, 2019; Brown & Sumner, 2016). Keenan and Newton (2015) stated that unresolved workplace conflicts represent the largest costs to an organization that are reducible.

People who have been bullied in the workplace experience a wide range of problems. Impacts of bullying at work can include post-traumatic stress disorder, in part because people self-identify so strongly with their work. Prolonged intimidation may cause panic attacks, depression, stress breakdown, poor concentration, insecurity and compromised memory. Victims may become irritable, obsessive, hyper-vigilant or overly sensitive. They experience mood swings, indecision or a loss of humor, and may begin biting their nails, grinding their teeth or a relying on such substances as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol or sleeping aids.

Workplace bullying has effects on those who witness it as well as those who experience it, affecting the overall health of an organization, as reported by the BBC. Victims spend much of their time trying to gain support and defend themselves from the bullying, time that would otherwise be spent working. Those who witness workplace bullying may look for another job that offers a better working environment. Other effects of bullying on the workplace include greater absenteeism and turnover, more accidents, lower quality customer service, higher costs for employee assistance programs and decreased motivation and morale.

Conclusion

The availability of empirical evidence in this study indicates a significant relationship between workplace incivility and employee alienation under the moderating influence of organizational culture.

Recommendations

Drawing from the outcome of our study we therefore make the following vital recommendations.

1. Management of construction companies should develop and enforce comprehensive rudeness policies that outline what constitutes rudeness, reporting procedures, and consequences for violators.

2. Management of construction companies should conduct regular, mandatory training sessions on rudeness prevention and workplace conduct for all employees.

3. Management of construction companies should create and implement a zero-tolerance approach of bullying.

Management of construction companies should foster collaboration and camaraderie through structured activities that improve trust and reduce alienation.

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