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The Impact of Customer Incivility and Its Consequences on Hotel Employees: Mediating Role of Employees' Emotional Exhaustion

Farrukh Shahzad [1], Shahab Ali [2,3,4], Iftikhar Hussain [4], Li Sun [1,*], Chunlei Wang [1] and Fayyaz Ahmad [5]

[1] School of Economics and Management, Guangdong University of Petrochemical Technology, Maoming 525011, China; farrukh.hailian@gmail.com (F.S.)
[2] School of Economics and Business Administration, Chongqing University, Chongqing 400050, China
[3] Department of Business Administration, University of Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir 11000, Pakistan
[4] Faculty of Management Sciences, University of Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir 11000, Pakistan
[5] School of Economics, Lanzhou University, Lanzhou 730000, China; fayyaz@lzu.edu.cn
* Correspondence: sunli_gyjg@gdupt.edu.cn

Abstract: Employees' negative outcomes have continued to be the logical position emphasized by service-oriented organizations that 'the customer is always right' and organizational policies that require employees to make customers happy, even in situations involving a customer's uncivil behavior. The current study builds and evaluates a research model that analyzes the associations among customer incivility, employees' emotional exhaustion, employees' intentions to quit the workplace, and employees' satisfaction at the workplace using the conservation of resources theory. Employees from four- and five-star hotels in Pakistan. The data shows that customers' incivility boosts employees' emotional exhaustion and employees' intentions to quit the workplace, but intentions have no effect on employees' satisfaction at the workplace when using structural equation modeling. The results show that employees' emotional exhaustion slightly mediates customers' incivility influence on employees' intentions to quit the workplace while totally mediating customers' incivility effect on employees' satisfaction at the workplace. The findings' implications, limitations, and future directions are examined.

Keywords: customer incivility; employee's intention; customer uncivil behavior; emotional exhaustion; Pakistan

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1. Introduction

The travel and hospitality sector's emphasis on human resources to ensure organizational performance and offer great services in a continually challenging competitive marketplace context explains why managers and researchers continue to value this industry [1]. This clarifies why stress [2], service disruption [3], counter-productive work behavior [4] turnover behavior [1], high job expectations, and undermined client behaviors [5] are all common in this sector. Research started to highlight issues concerning workplace harassment and its effects on job results [6], whereas a body of studies examining the substantial detrimental effects of customer incivility on service workers' professional consequences has received attention from different researchers [7,8].

Customer-contact workers, particularly those in the organization concerned with services, are unprotected from a stressful working atmosphere that is frequently linked with grievances and frustrations from customers, workmates, or an irate manager [9,10]. Even in instances with rude clients, this customer-contact personnel must work under the assumption that "the customer is always right" [10]. Keeping customers always happy is a very difficult task for the employees, but providing a friendly and welcoming atmosphere, feigning sentiments, and making appearances friendly and caring in any situation can add to the pressure, negatively impacting employees' work consequences and

betterment [11]. Customer-contact workers turn out to be deeply frustrated and thus not capable of concentrating on their jobs in such conditions and are more likely to exhibit bad effects such as job stress, mental and emotional exhaustion, low performance, employees' emotional exhaustion, and reduced enthusiasm [2,6,12]. "Low-intensity deviant behavior with uncertain intent to hurt the target, in breach of workplace standards for mutual respect", ref. [13].

Workplace incivility is among the most horrible types of maltreatment of service personnel, considering its low intensity and unpredictability [10]. Empirical evidence suggests that impoliteness impacts how people operate at work, decreases job commitment, and inhibits creativity and task performance [6,13]. According to [12], concluded in their research that virtually all of the nine thousand employees polled said they had witnessed workplace incivility. Customer incivility causes psychological tiredness and decreases the intrinsic motivation of the workers at work in hotels in South Korea [14,15]. Workers' interaction with workers and customers' interaction with workers are both examples of incivility. Moreover, incivility is a form of interpersonal deviation in which offenders display such conduct to benefit themselves, purposefully injure individuals, or organizations, and such uncivil behavior may occur without the perpetrator's knowledge or may be represented as unintended by the perpetrator [10]. How incivility perpetrated by outsiders is perceived and controlled by workers of the organization, as well as the likely outcomes of these practices on work engagement and productivity of the workers, remains a key consideration for researchers and supervisors [6,16]. As a result, a robust theoretic outline on incivility is needed to help managers and academics better understand its effects on workers' work-related outcomes and overall organizational success.

According to studies, victims of incivility have lower levels of emotional well-being, higher turnover intentions, and fewer job commitments [9,17–19]. Workers are exposed to incivility from time to time, and they have witnessed it at some point; however, the effects of incivility on certain work outcomes, such as intention to quit the workplace and work satisfaction, are the fundamental consideration of this research, especially in the Pakistan hotel industry.

Inadequate HR practices are still prevalent in the tourist and hotel industries, according to research, and comparable behaviors may be seen in different countries [20,21]. Most service-oriented businesses use experts to help them search for and choose the finest individuals for front-line roles. Contact-customer hotel staff in Pakistan, like any other firm, are required to regulate their feelings and seem cheerful while providing the services, regardless of their internal emotions, in order to achieve customer pleasure. These workers are vulnerable to emotional exhaustion—job distress that depletes personnel's emotional capabilities because of high mental stress [20]. Organizational effectiveness has been proven to be hampered by work-related stress. In the Nigerian hotel business, for example, [20] found that emotional exhaustion lowered performance at work, increased employees' intentions to quit, and was positively linked with emotional labor. Similarly, [22] discovered a link between emotional tiredness and work performance. To put it another way, it seems that emotionally fatigued personnel lack the necessary cerebral capacity to respond civilly to uncivil customers [16].

Recognizing the indications of poor HR practices [21] and calling for greater research on workplace incivility to gain a deeper understanding of this pervasive and expensive conduct [23], this research examines the links among stressors (customer incivility and emotional exhaustion) and specific employee consequences (including employees' intentions to quit and work satisfaction). The research looks at (a) the effects of customers' incivility on workers' emotional exhaustion, workers' intentions to quit, and workers' satisfaction at the workplace; (b) the impacts of workers' emotional exhaustion on workers' intentions to quit the workplace and their work satisfaction; and (c) the function of workers' emotional exhaustion as a mediator of customers' incivility effects on workers' intentions to quit the workplace and their work satisfaction. The data for this study was collected from customer service representatives from the four- and five-star hotel industry in Pakistan. In

the management literature, research indications from hotel staff dealing with customers in Pakistan still need further investigation [24].

Similarly, data from banking employees [10], staff relating to marketing [25], sales professionals [26], and manufacturing firm professionals have been employed in customer incivility research [27], though indications from hotel personnel who interact with customers are scarce. As a result, more comprehensive research from diverse sectors and organizations is needed to enhance the theoretical underpinnings of customer incivility and validate its findings [23]. Furthermore, research has shown that customer incivility is a worldwide occurrence; nevertheless, diverse cultural contexts are probable to impact how it is committed, understood, and dealt with, as well as the potential consequences for workers' productivity and organizational success [6]. These insights from the research study will contribute to the literature on incivility management and will extend our understanding of consumer incivility.

2. Background Theory and Assumptions Formation

The COR theory by [28] provides the theoretic foundation for the current study's predicted relationships. Employees are more likely to obtain and retain things that assist them do job responsibilities, according to the hypothesis. The COR concept describes how workers deal with and react to workplace strain. The COR theory recognizes four sorts of resources: items (for example, a tangible advantage that an individual invests), social sustenance (for example, that contributes to workers' betterment), employee personal traits (for example, expertise), and energy resources (for example, money and awareness) [28]. An individual becomes stressed, according to the notion, when he or she is unable to obtain resources invested in the workplace or when there is a possibility of a loss of resources. Due to the features of work in customer care, employees are more prone to stress like anxiety [29], perceived constant worry [20,30], and emotional exhaustion [4,20] because of difficult customer dealings. To build a welcoming atmosphere, manage their feelings, and look nice in facilitating the best services that entail uncivil conduct from clients, customer-contact hotel personnel are likely to feel worried and fear of loss of organizational resources.

3. Employees' Emotional Exhaustion, Incivility, Employee Intention to Quit the Workplace, and Work Satisfaction

The majority of empirical studies on incivility in employees have focused on the occurrence of bad-mannered actions during worker-to-worker contact [30,31] and its effects on the performance of the workers like pleasure, stress [32], absences from the workplace [33], and employee intentions to quit the workplace [17,33,34].

Workers are prone to attain, keep, and reserve specific organizational resources that help them perform their duties, according to the COR theory [28], but they also fear the loss of such organizational resources, being unable to obtain invested resources, or experiencing real resource loss when they are stressed. On one side, service-oriented firms give possibilities for customer-contact personnel to attain and retain organizational resources, while the structure of their employment exposes them to stress, putting their collected resources at risk [7]. The hotel staff deals with clients on a frequent basis, offering outstanding service and guaranteeing service quality [20]. Customers should repay their excellent manners with politeness throughout these conversations, according to customer-contact hotel staff. The staff dealing with the customers either acquire resources or keep the accrued resources if such an exchange of polite behavior occurs. If such courtesy is not reciprocated, hotel workers/staff risk losing or being threatened with losing their earned resources. Due to the large number of competitors in the hotel sector and customers' perceptions of excellent customer satisfaction and happiness (Piccoli, Lui, & Grün, 2017), such staff follow the organization's guidelines and protocols, maintain a friendly atmosphere, regulate their feelings, and always seem too comfortable, ensuring that customers are always extremely happy. Such obligations may be emotionally draining on their own, and interactions with unpleasant or arrogant clients are likely to add to the burden, affecting their overall

job performance [11]. As [33] have discovered, customer incivility enhances employees' turnover intentions and reduces attendance among bank employees in thirty-two branches while decreasing sales performance. Ref. [34] indicated the incivility among workers relating to insurance clients in Canada. As per [7] found a substantial positive link between incivility from clients and employee turnover intentions in restaurants. As a result, we suggested theories.

H1: *Customer incivility positively impacts on employees' emotional exhaustion.*

H2: *Customer incivility positively impact on employees' intention to quit the workplace.*

H3: *Customer incivility negatively impact on satisfaction of employees at workplace.*

3.1. Employees' Emotional Exhaustion, Employee Work Satisfaction, and Intentions to Quit the Workplace

Employees who are subjected to too many emotional stresses that drain their positive energies [20,35] are said to be experiencing employee emotional exhaustion. The staff dealing with customers is prone to physical, cognitive, and emotional exhaustion at work due to their boundary-spanning function [22]. Feelings are an essential process that impacts how people react to situations. As a result, it is not uncommon for service organization customer-contact personnel to exhibit unfavorable job-related consequences or fitness issues [2,24]. The two specified worker consequences explored in this study are employees' intentions to quit and employee work satisfaction.

Employees' intentions to quit have been shown to be an immediate antecedent to a real turnover attitude, and the significant costs associated with it have been a key source of worry for organizations [35,36]. Employees' intention to quit was described as "readiness to leave the job" [37] (p. 918). A research study concluded that employees' intention to quit is linked to employees' emotional exhaustion. For example, [20] found that employees' emotional exhaustion raised employees' intentions to quit the workplace in a sample of hotel workers in Nigeria. Employees' emotional exhaustion was substantially and favorably related to employees' intentions to quit the workplace among the staff dealing with customers in hotels situated in Turkey, as per the findings of [38]. Customer-contact workers are emotionally fatigued, according to COR theory, when they observe a danger of losing the organizational resources available to them to accomplish the organizational tasks [20]. Workers who deal with customers get dissatisfied in such situations and are more inclined to look for work elsewhere. As a result, we offered the following hypothesis:

H4: *Emotional exhaustion has a positive impact on employees' intentions to quit the workplace.*

Employees' work satisfaction is "the happy emotional reaction coming from the evaluation of one's employment as attaining or helping the attainment of one's job values" as per Locke (1969) (p. 316) [39]. Employees' feelings at work impact how they operate and behave in their jobs [1]. As a result, one may correctly assess employee work satisfaction by observing their feelings and attitude toward their efforts [1]. According to [40] employees' emotional exhaustion and employees' satisfaction at work cannot be distinguished. Further research has discovered a substantial negative association between employees' emotional exhaustion and employees' satisfaction at the workplace (−0.64) [41]. Workers who are emotionally weary get irritated when they are unable to accomplish their job duties, and they frequently acquire bad attitudes toward their employers [40]. Workers' performance at the workplace is reduced if they are not emotionally and mentally relaxed. The productivity of a satisfied employee is much higher as compared with that of an unsatisfied employee, as per the theory of COR. Therefore, we can hypothesize that:

H5: *Employees' emotional exhaustion has a negative impact on employees' work performance.*

3.2. Employees' Emotional Exhaustion Act as a Mediator

There is empirical evidence that employees' emotional exhaustion is linked to employees' intentions to quit and employees' satisfaction at the workplace [20,38,42]. High job expectations raised employees' emotional exhaustion, which depleted emotional resources in employees [43,44]. When employees believe they have a deficiency in handling mental and emotional resources to complete work obligations, employees' emotional exhaustion is high [40,45]. The hotel staff dealing with the customers needed to simulate their feelings and emotions during the service delivery process (i.e., encounters with rowdy guests), which can be a challenging activity that increases pressure in the mind and leads to unfavorable job consequences and fitness issues [6,11]. Interactions among hotel staff dealing with customers and insulting customers can increase pressure on workers' attitudes, leading to employees' emotional exhaustion when they recognize the dangers of losing organizational resources available to them to accomplish the organizational tasks. Employees' emotional exhaustion, in turn, can enhance workers' emotions, leading to employees' intentions to quit the workplace and low job satisfaction. As a result, we presented the following hypotheses:

H6: *Employees' emotional exhaustion mediates the impact of customers incivility upon employees' intentions to quit the workplace.*

H7: *Emotional exhaustion mediates between customer incivility and employee' satisfaction at work (Figure 1).*

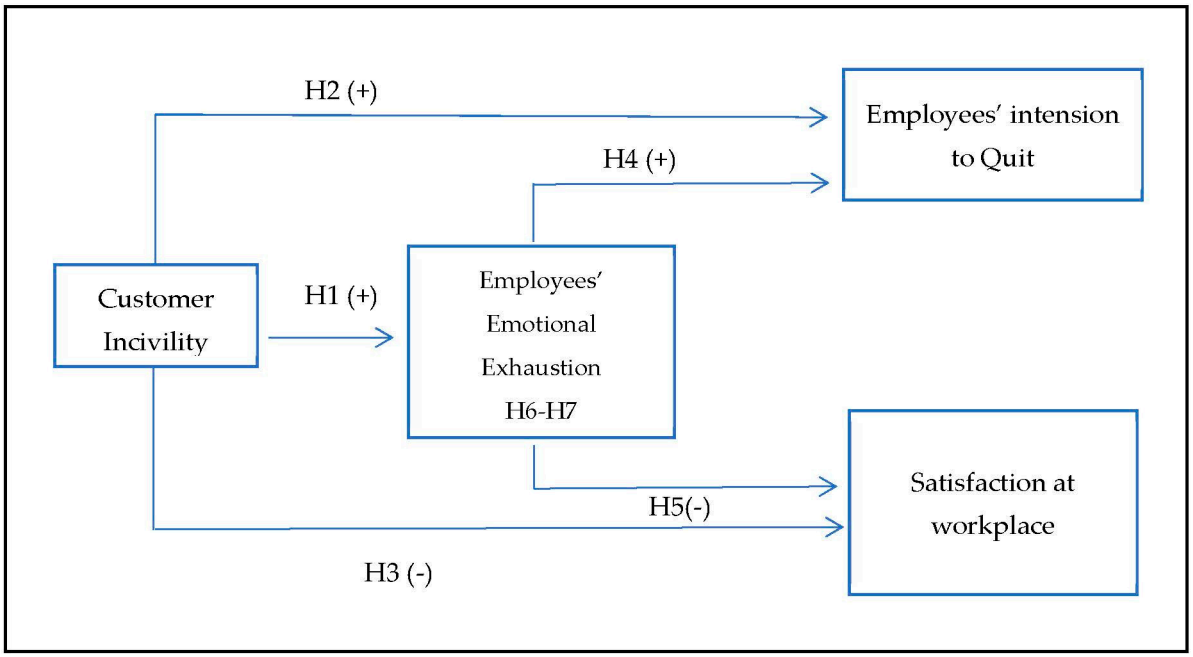


Figure 1. Research Model.

4. Methodology of Investigation

4.1. Procedures and Sampling

Authors Employees dealing with customer care in four- and five-star hotels situated in Pakistan were asked to fill out the questionnaire relating to the present research study. A letter explaining the research goals and ensuring anonymity was addressed to the management of these hotels prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. To verify that the questionnaire was thorough and clear, preliminary research was conducted with 50 hotel staff who deal with customers (i.e., bell agents, concierges, front desk agents, etc.). A pilot study confirmed there was no need to change the instrument. The researcher

originally handed 500 questionnaires in unopened envelopes to customer-contact staff. The replies were anonymous, and the responses were received back in sealed envelopes. The sealed envelopes and anonymity were implemented to reduce the risk of common-based fraud [46]. Only 305 completed surveys were used in the study out of 490 given, with an overall 62 percent response rate. Incomplete responses were disqualified.

4.2. Methods for Measurement

4.2.1. Customer Incivility

Six elements from [47] were used to calculate customer incivility, for instance, "customer take out anger on me", The items were answered using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = highly agree) ($\alpha = 0.91$).

4.2.2. Employees' Emotional Exhaustion

5-item scale was used to test employees' emotional exhaustion [48]. For instance, "I feel emotionally tired from my job". A five-point scale (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = highly agree) was used to answer this scale ($\alpha = 0.89$).

4.2.3. Employees' Intention to Quit the Workplace

Three items from [49] were used to assess employees' intentions to quit the workplace. For instance, "Most probably I'll quit this job soon". A 5-point scale (e.g., 1 = Strong disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = highly agree) was used to answer this scale ($\alpha = 0.92$).

4.2.4. Employees' Satisfaction at Workplace

Three questions from [50] were used to assess employees' satisfaction in the workplace. For instance, "My job provides me the sensation of accomplishment". The items were answered using a 5-point scale (i.e., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = highly agree) ($\alpha = 0.92$).

4.3. Analyze the Data

We have used CFA to validate the convergent and discriminant validity composite reliability [51]. The second phase involves evaluating the proposed relationships using structural equation modeling. The relevance of the indirect effects study through Amos 24 was tested using a bootstrapping approach through a 5000-sample size produced by 95 percent (CI) [52].

5. Results

Table 1 shows the results of the sample characteristics. Results show 305 customer-contact hotel personnel, with 198 (64.9%) males and 107 (35%) females. The participants are between the ages of 19 and 50. Most of the respondents, 150, hold a graduate-level education (49.3%); on average, 155 (50.8%) were unmarried, 150 (49.2%) were married, and high-job experience employees ranging between 5 and 8 years with an average of 130 (42.5%).

Table 1. Demographics.

Atributes	Frequency %	Values	Percentage
Age	19–24	34	11.5
	15–32	121	40.4
	33–40	105	35.5
	41–49	35	12.3
	50 above	10	0.3
Sex	Male	198	64.9
	Female	107	35.1
Marital Status	Unmarried	155	50.8
	Married	150	49.2
Qualifications	Secondary School	50	16.3
	Graduate	150	49.3
	Masters	105	34.4
Experience	<1 year	70	23.0
	1 to 4	60	19.5
	5 to 8	130	42.5
	9 and above	45	15.0

5.1. Measures' Psychometric Qualities

Normality checks were performed on this sample. The 17 elements' kurtosis and skewness values varied from (0.393 to 0.721) and (0.054 to 0.036). As a result, the items in the sample meet the assumptions of CFA [53]. All items remained substantial ($p < 0.001$), and the fit statistics were as follows: CMIN = 429.821; DF = 115; CMIN/DF = 3.79; CFI = 0.89; IFI = 0.90; RMSEA = 0.091; SRMR = 0.065; CMIN/DF = 3.79; CMIN/DF = 3.79; CMIN/DF = 3.81; [54]. Table 2 represents all parameters loaded correctly on their factor loadings and exceeded the criterion of 0.50, indicating that measurements are convergence [55]. To determine discriminant validity, AVE values for all pairings of constructs were compared with the squared correlation of the other constructs. The AVE value for every construct was higher than the squared correlation of the other constructs, indicating that discriminant validity was supported [55]. Data indicated that the composite dependability score was more than 0.60 (see Table 2) [53].

Table 2. CFA Analysis.

Scale Items	Loadings	*t*-Value	CR	AVE	α
Customer incivility			0.85	0.51	0.87
Customers show anger at me	0.90	1.00 [a]			
Customers pass bad comments toward me	0.85	18.60			
Customers made us feel that we are inferior	0.63	13.69			
Customers show themselves as irritated	0.63	13.82			
Customers don't have to trust on my information and reconfirm it from top-management	0.60	12.90			
Customer doubts about my competency	0.59	12.75			
Employees' Emotional Exhaustion			0.89	0.59	0.88
I sense emotionally exhausted from work	0.73	1.00 [a]			
I sense sadness at end of day	0.80	13.33			
I sense fatigued in the morning when I get up and feel whole the day boring	0.85	14.13			
I sense mental pressure all-day	0.74	12.21			
I feel psychological distress at the workplace	0.75	12.36			
Employees' Intention to quit the Workplace			0.91	0.75	0.90
It seems that I'll search new job soon	0.81	1.00 [a]			
I mostly think about leaving this job	0.93	18.20			
Maybe next year I'll leave this job	0.77	15.47			
Satisfaction at workplace			0.90	0.74	0.92
My job make me a sense of satisfaction	0.80	1.00 [a]			
I really enjoy at workplace	0.79	16.85			
I am very much satisfied with my work	0.81	15.49			

Fitness of Model: CMIN = 270.709; DF = 109; CMIN/df = 2.39; CFI = 0.94; IFI = 0.94; RMESA = 0.059; SRMR = 0.069.

Table 3 represents the means and standard deviations from the correlation analysis of the observed variables. Customer incivility was significantly positively associated with employees' emotional exhaustion (r = 0.34, $p < 0.01$) and employees' intention to quit the workplace (r = 0.27, $p < 0.01$), while negatively related to employee satisfaction at the workplace (r = −0.17, $p < 0.01$), as shown in Table 3. Employee emotional exhaustion was positively associated with employees' intention to quit the workplace (r = 0.30, $p < 0.01$), whereas it was negatively associated with employees' satisfaction at the workplace (r = −0.28, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3. Correlation Analysis.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4
Customers incivility	2.91	0.92	-			
Emp. Emo Exh	3.19	0.90	0.34 **	-		
Emp. Int. to quit	3.09	0.88	0.27 **	0.30 **	-	
Satisfaction at work	2.78	1.01	−0.17 **	−0.28 **	−0.052 **	-

** $p < 0.01$, Emp. Emo Exh = Employees' emotional exhaustion; Emp. Int. to quit = Employees' Intension to quit.

5.2. Hypothesized Model Tests

Figure 2 shows that the hypothesized model values (CMIN = 395.819; DF = 139; CMIN/DF = 2.89; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.08; SRMR = 0.07) match the data satisfactorily.

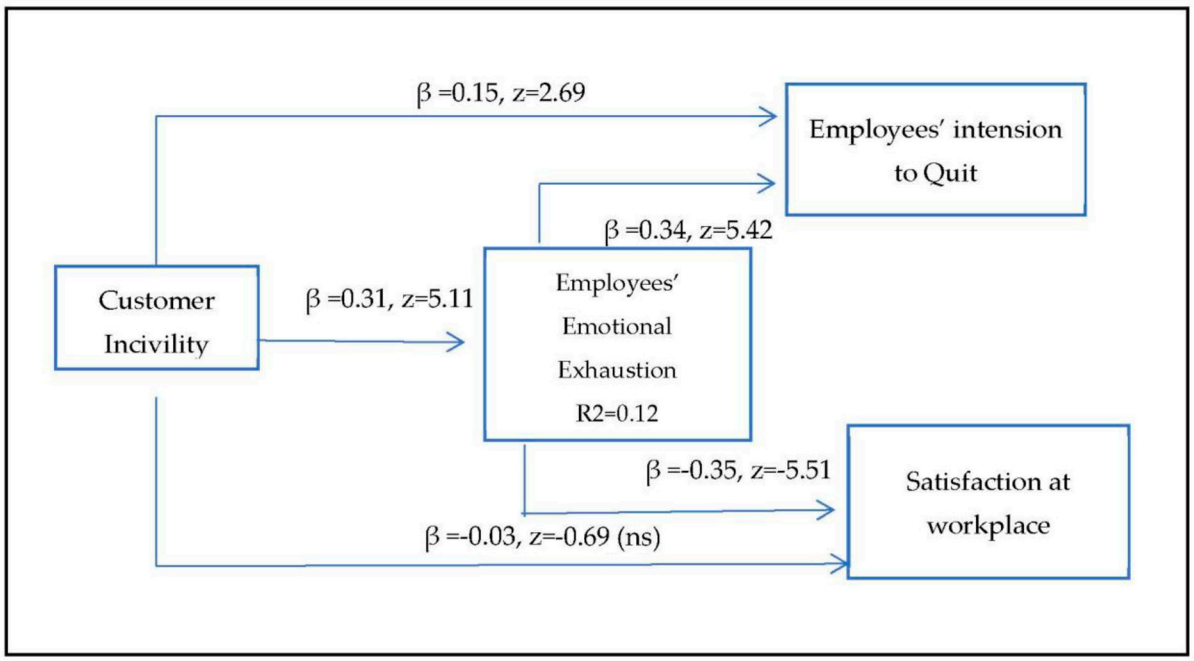


Figure 2. SME: Model fit statistics. CMIN = 395.819; DF = 139; CMIN/df = 2.89; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.92; RMSEA = 0.08; SRMR = 0.07; Customer incivility and employees' satisfaction at workplace is not significant.

The route coefficient of customer incivility to employees' emotional exhaustion is significantly positive (β = 0.31; z = 5.11, $p < 0$). As a result, H1 has supporting evidence empirically. The path coefficient from customer incivility to employees' intention to quit the workplace is equally significantly positive (β = 0.15; z = 2.69, $p < 0.01$), according to the data (see Figure 2). As a result, H2 has empirical support. Furthermore, given that the path coefficient from customer incivility to employees' satisfaction at the workplace shows insignificant values (i.e., β = −0.03, z = 0.69, $p < 0.055$, ns), there is no empirical evidence for H3.

The values show significantly positive- route coefficients from employees' emotional exhaustion to employees' intention to quit the workplace (β = 0.34, z = 5.42, $p < 0.001$), whereas the results show significant but negative values regarding employees' satisfaction at the workplace (β = 0.35, z = 5.51, $p < 0.001$). As a result, H4 and H5 have empirical support.

The results of Table 4 show how employees' emotional exhaustion works as a mediator. The importance of the indirect path was tested using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 samples, a bias-corrected percentile, and an accelerated confidence interval, with the bootstrapped confidence interval excluding zero [56]. Table 4 shows that employees' emotional exhaustion largely mediates the impact of Customer incivility on employees' intention to quit the workplace (indirect effect = 0.081, LLCI = 0.039, and ULCI = 0.128, $p < 0.001$) when excluding zero. As a result, H6 is recommended. Employees' emotional exhaustion does not contain zero and completely mediates the impact of Customer incivility on employees' satisfaction at the workplace (indirect effect = 0.089, LLCI = −0.158, and ULCI = −0.049, $p < 0.001$). H7 is thus supported as well. In customer incivility, the findings explain 0.3 percent of the variation, 13% in employees' emotional exhaustion, 21% in employees' intention to quit the workplace, and 15% in employees' satisfaction at the workplace.

Table 4. Bootstrapping findings of mediation effect of Emo. Exh.

Hypothesized Mediation Relationship	Unstandardized Indirect Estimates	LLCI	ULCI	*p*<
Customer Incivility Emo. Exh Turnover intensions (0.229 [a] × 0.323 [b])	0.081	0.039	0.128	0.001
Customer Incivility Emo. Exh Satisfaction at work (0.229 [a] × −0.399 [b])	−0.089	−0.158	−0.049	0.001

Notes: LLCI = low-level confidence interval; ULCI = Upper-level confidence interval.

6. Conclusions

The link between customer incivility, employees' emotional exhaustion, employees' intention to quit the workplace, and employees' satisfaction at the workplace among customer-contact hotel staff in Pakistan was explored in this research study. To investigate the hypothesized correlations, the COR theory by [28] was employed as the theoretical framework. Results of this research suggest that customer incivility has an impact on employee job consequences in the Pakistan hotel business, where a lack of modern human resource techniques remains a key concern [21]. Research has indicated that employees' emotional exhaustion becomes high as customer incivility increases, which affects workers' job results (e.g., [7,34]. The results of the study also indicate that there is a positive and substantial association between customer incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion. Prior research from a range of sectors, samples, and geographies confirms the present findings [6,25,26]. In other words, this response can be the result of negative emotions and feelings of the workers, which they feel at the workplace as a result of incivility from customers (for instance, customer incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion); the sample of hotel employees is similar to samples from a range of businesses, samples, and areas.

Our results supported the COR theory [28], which states that staff who deal with customers feel emotional exhaustion when they feel that their available organizational resources are in danger and they will lose them due to their job stress. Customer incivility boosted employees' intention to quit the workplace among the hotel staff personnel who deal with customers in Pakistan, as per findings. This demonstrates that in the service business, customer incivility is an important precursor to employees' intentions to quit the workplace. Our findings are similar to previous empirical [57]. The results of the research also show that customer incivility has no discernible impact on employees' satisfaction at the workplace. The probable cause might be: (a) the Pakistani hotel business lacks modern

human resource techniques; (b) unstable working conditions, job uncertainty, low pay, and extended working timings [58]. These circumstances may have already drained these personnel of their enthusiasm for their jobs, and interactions with obnoxious clients may have no impact on their productivity (i.e., work satisfaction). We can say that employees who are dissatisfied with their employment due to low pay and job insecurity can have a casual response about job responsibilities, so they are less concerned about rude clients. As a result, our findings support previous research [23] that customer incivility is a widespread concept and cultural perspective may have a significant impact on how it is perpetrated by clients, perceived, and handled by the staff, which deals with customers and the hospitality industry. The findings of the study indicate that employees' emotional exhaustion acted as a partial mediator of customer incivility's effects on employees' intentions to quit the workplace and a complete mediator of employees' satisfaction at the workplace. Previous investigations [7,57] revealed evidence of employees' emotional exhaustion playing a completely mediating role in the effect of customer incivility on employees' intention to quit the workplace, which contradicts our findings. Due to uncivil client conduct, hotel personnel frequently suffer emotional exhaustion, resulting in employees' intention to quit the workplace and high levels of job discontent. In reaction to difficulties from customer unpleasant conduct, customer-contact personnel get emotionally drained, increasingly uncomfortable, unable to focus on responsibilities, and unsatisfied with their employment, according to the research [10]. Our conclusions might also be explained by an inconsistent workplace environment, a high unemployment rate, and a lack of benefits. As a result, our findings lend statistically supporting evidence to the conceptual framework of incivility's worldwide generalizability.

6.1. Implications for Theory

The results of this study add to the hospitality and service organizations existing body of knowledge in several ways. First, by constructing and testing a model that examines the links between customer incivility and employees' emotional exhaustion, as well as how employees' emotional exhaustion mediates the impacts of customer incivility on employees' intentions to quit the workplace and employees' satisfaction at the workplace, this study adds to the existing body of knowledge in the tourism and service sectors. Previous research has shown that customer incivility is a serious problem in the world [23], a powerful factor [47], a crucial component [59,60], and a potent variable [27] that has a considerable impact on employees' emotional exhaustion. Customer-contact staff in the hospitality industry must operate with the consideration that "the customer is always right", providing a friendly environment, feigning emotions, and making appearances pleasurable to provide superior service even when customers show a rude attitude [10], which clarifies why customer-contact staff suffers from physical, behavioral, and psychological distress at work [22,61].

Secondly, a research sample for this research was collected from hotel personnel in Pakistan who deal with customers. The country is still underrepresented in the literature on the service sector and tourism [24,62], so the presented results can be helpful for the future development of this sector. To put it another way, statistical findings about how hotel staff deal with customers in Pakistan, a developing Asian nation, add to the customer incivility's theoretic foundations and workers' job-related results [10,62,63].

Lastly, in contrast to [14,63] findings, a new notion has been formed about the insignificant association between customer incivility and employees' satisfaction at the workplace among hotel staff dealing with customers in Pakistan. This notion, backed by a previous suggestion from various cross-cultural structures, might help widen the theoretical underpinnings of customer incivility's impacts on job results [10,64].

6.2. Practical Implications

The current study has some practical consequences for service organization administration. Even with its lower intensity and unpredictability, incivility in organizations

are regarded as the most heinous kind of service employee misbehavior that leads to unfavorable job consequences [6,14,33]. The administration must give it importance, raise awareness, and categorize customer incivility as a concern. Customer-contact personnel's minds will be prepared for future occurrences, eliminating the initial panic linked to unexpected situations and maybe reducing emotional exhaustion. It is essential for the administration to undertake research, whether through a questionnaire or an interview, to learn how customer-contact personnel perceive and handle customer incivility and the sentiments that follow. The feedback will offer a clear knowledge of the effects on organizational performance and the extent to which workers are happy and satisfied with their jobs. For the reason that half of an issue is addressed, the insight details may be utilized to build a strategic plan to lessen the impacts of customer incivility. Similarly, the administration of hotels should do comparable research to acquire feedback from people on the potential causes and/or conditions under which they may act rudely or uncivilly towards hotel personnel who deal with customers while serving. The findings of this kind of study are expected to shed light on the true reasons for hotel sector incivility. Moreover, the findings will aid management in formulating suitable strategies and providing enough training to improve the abilities of contact-customer personnel to offer extraordinary services that exceed consumers' expectations. For the reason that the Pakistani hotel industry lacks modern human resource practices, the administration of hotels should be proactive in formulating and delivering suitable training programs for customer-contact employees, like skilled informed mechanisms, which may not only reduce the risk of customer incivility but also develop their skills in offering outstanding services and managing techniques [33,65]. To assist the victims (workers) of customer incivility in managing the aftermath sentiments of the impacts, a supportive system and ongoing training program should be devised [14,66]. Given the minor direct association between customer incivility and employees' satisfaction at the workplace and the entire mediating function of employees' emotional exhaustion, the administration should put in place organizational procedures and policies to help customer incivility victims (workers). As Pakistan has a diverse ethnic population with distinct cultures, languages, and traditions [60,67], teaching current and future customers about anticipated conduct through awareness programs can be a viable way to reduce customer incivility. Customers can be educated with different methods, including short massage videos and/or billboards shown at key locations throughout the hotel.

6.3. Future Directions and Limitations

Even though we have offered several implications (theoretical and practical), there are a few constraints. First, this research has used cross-sectional data collected from employees working in 4- and 5-star Pakistani hotels who deal with customers. Although the data collection appears to corroborate the causal linkages, adopting a time-wave approach would help reduce the possibility of selection bias. Furthermore, future research might benefit from incorporating longitudinal data to draw conclusions about the causation of the factors. Secondly, the present research concentrated on hotel personnel who deal with customers in Pakistan. However, in future studies, data from employees of other service firms like cafes, airlines, banking, and healthcare institutions might be valuable in generating causal generalizations.

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