

Effortful Perseverance as a Buffer against the Impact of Workplace Incivility on Burnout among Human Service Professionals

Saba Zer Naz Hafsa, Anis-ul- Haque, Arooj Fatima Mazhar, Syeda Rabia Shaheen, and Mehwish Ishfaq

Abstract

Background: Workplace incivility subtle, low-intensity deviant behavior with unclear intent to harm has emerged as a serious concern in high-stress occupations such as healthcare and education. It significantly contributes to psychological strain, job dissatisfaction, and professional burnout. However, personal attributes like effortful perseverance, a key facet of grit, may act as protective factors that mitigate these negative effects. This study aimed to investigate whether effortful perseverance moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout among human service professionals.

Method: This cross-sectional study included 545 human service professionals (184 men and 358 women), aged 25 to 50 years, comprising doctors, nurses, dentists, and teachers. Participants were selected through convenience sampling from hospitals and universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. They completed the Workplace Incivility Scale, the Burnout Short Measure (BSM-10), and the Short Grit Scale (Grit-S). Correlation and moderation analyses were conducted to explore the relationships among the variables.

Results: The findings of this study revealed that workplace incivility was significantly positively associated with burnout, whereas effortful perseverance showed a significant negative relationship with both workplace incivility and burnout. Moreover, effortful perseverance significantly moderated the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout, reducing its adverse impact. This moderating effect was consistent across all subscales of incivility, except for Workplace Disrespect and Intrusive Behavior.

Conclusions: The findings highlight the value of effortful perseverance as a psychological buffer against workplace stressors. Strengthening this trait in human service professionals may enhance resilience and reduce the risk of burnout, supporting healthier and more productive work environments.

Keywords: Workplace incivility, burnout, grit, effortful perseverance, human service professionals

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Background

Workplace incivility has garnered significant attention in recent years due to its growing prevalence and well-documented detrimental effects on both employees and organizations. It can result in substantial costs, including decreased productivity, increased turnover, and deteriorating employee well-being (Porath & Pearson, 2013). Numerous studies have shed light on the negative consequences of workplace incivility (Carmona-Cobo & Lopez-Zafra, 2022; Vahle-Hinz et al., 2019). Researching workplace incivility in Pakistan can contribute valuable insights to the existing literature by highlighting the unique cultural, organizational, and social factors that influence its occurrence and impact, as well as its role in predicting various workplace outcomes (Khan et al., 2021; Mehmood, Sajid, Mehmood, Bano, Ullah, & Ashraf, 2021). Research on Workplace Incivility is slowly gaining ground in China, Pakistan, South Korea and Sweden. Taken together, the findings indicated that a few countries conducted empirical research on the subject matter. This result was a clear indicator of the research potential to be fulfilled (Vasconcelos, 2020). It was also argued that workplace incivility is less reported but widely experienced in workplaces in Pakistan. Additionally, limited research has examined the influence of factors like grit on mitigating the negative effects of workplace incivility (Manzoor, Manzoor & Khan, 2020).

It might be characterized as less frequent and intense vocal or nonverbal acts. The term Workplace Incivility was first time coined as mildly aberrant behavior at work with unclear malicious intent. These are typical of being impolite and inconsiderate, showing no consideration for other people (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The definition of incivility was extended by the researchers as, it is the action of gossiping, and privacy invasion, proposed by (Martin & Hine, 2005). Recently Scholars (Handoyo et al., 2018) provided a five-dimensional view of workplace incivility i.e. personal affairs intervention, abandonment, unfriendly communication, inconsiderate behaviour and privacy invasion. Researchers (e.g; Matthews & Ritter 2016) explained workplace incivility as a unidimensional four-item based gender invariant construct.

It can have a significant impact on the well-being of employees, with negative consequences for both individuals and organizations (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Employee-level negative outcomes include increased psychological distress and anxiety, poor sleep, decreased job satisfaction etc whereas; organizational level negative outcomes include lower levels of engagement, intentional decrease in work efforts, worker's declining performance, low commitment to the workplace, counterproductive workplace behaviour, low creative workplace involvement, increased job burnout & turnover intention and low performance (for example; Adil, Hamid et al., 2020, Demsky et al., 2019; Rahim, & Cosby, 2016).

Consequently, researchers of occupational health psychology and related fields became interested in studying the causes (workplace ostracism, moral leadership, trustworthiness, authentic leadership, curmudgeon Personality) and consequences of workplace incivility like, employee fatigue, creativity, work-family conflict, helping others or prosocial behaviours, knowledge or information hiding, work efforts, job anxiety & innovative

work behaviour, counter productive work behavior (for example; (Anjum et al., 2021; Irum et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2022). Many researchers from Pakistan (for example, Butt & Yazdani, 2021; Nawaz et al., 2022) and many researchers from around the globe (Schilpzand et al., 2016; Vasconcelos, 2020) sent the call for doing workplace incivility research (Aqeel et al., 2024).

It was evident that workplace incivility can lead to high withdrawal behaviour among employees (Zia-ud-Din, Arif, & Shabbir, 2017) low employee engagement (Jawahar & Schreurs, 2018) low job performance (Wang & Chen, 2020) and high burnout (He et al., 2021). Literature has focused only on work-related exhaustion and not on burnout as a whole (Viotti et al., 2021). By reviewing the literature it was evident that researchers had little focus on burnout as a whole as an outcome variable of workplace incivility. Burnout can trigger many serious consequences for organizations like turnover, less job embeddedness, decreased citizenship behaviour etc. Only a few scholars considered both variables emotional exhaustion and burnout as important outcomes of workplace incivility (e.g; Taylor et al., 2017).

It is known as professional exhaustion. The term was first time coined by (Freudenberger, 1974). Burnout was also defined as it is a psychological syndrome that manifests as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishments (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Individuals experiencing burnout may doubt their abilities and the value of their contributions. To date, the most popular definition of burnout is the feeling of fatigue or annoyance brought on by commitment to a cause, way of life, or relationship that has not brought about the expected gratification (Freudenberger, 1974). Maslach-Pines (2005) agreed with it and defined burnout as a condition of prolonged engagement in emotionally taxing situations that results in physical, mental, and emotional weariness. Researchers exposed that human service professionals with a high level of perseverance could exhibit only a moderate level of burnout (Fabelico & Afalla, 2020). Scholars concluded that grit or perseverance is negatively related to burnout (Teuber et al., 2021)

Grit, which is described as tenacity and passion for long-term objectives, can be extremely important in reducing the negative effects that workplace rudeness has on workers. Grit was described by (Duckworth et al., 2009) as tenacity and desire for long-term goals. High levels of perseverance and effort are linked to successful results. Hardworking workers can persevere in difficult situations to complete the task at hand. According to scholars (Kabat-Farr et al., 2019) grit can be thought of as a personal resource that gives gritty people fortitude in the face of rudeness or unfavorable circumstances.

As per the frameworks of positive psychology, augmenting one's personal resources can be of great significance in safeguarding workers against any hazards to their welfare and in preserving their mental and physical health throughout their lifespan. This supports the idea that some traits can be viewed as personal coping resources, in line with the Conservation of Resource hypothesis (Hobfoll, 2001), which holds that personal traits represent resources to the extent that they typically aid in stress resistance. People's responses to stress may vary depending on their levels of

stress-reducing personality traits.

There are numerous personal factors which may play a significant role in workplace incivility and outcomes relationship. For example, resilience moderated the relationship of WPI with job stress (Hashemi et al 2018). The role of narcissism was also observed in the relationship between workplace incivility and task performance (Chen et al, 2019). Moral maturity role was also observed by (Gedro & Wang, 2013). The role of personality in the relationship between WPI and outcome was observed by (Doshy & Wang, 2014).

Whereas scholars Kabat-Farr et al. (2019) are the only researchers who considered grit as an important buffer of the WPI outcome relationship. It is evident from the above-cited literature that scholars fail to investigate the role of one of the most important personal factors which is beyond resilience coping and helping individuals in worse and always providing gritty employees with a boost even in the face of adversity.

The fundamental tenet of Hobfoll's theory of conservation of resources is that people will make every effort to protect, nurture, defend, and expand the resources they value, and that the possibility or actual loss of these resources poses a threat to them. Resources are characterized as those individual traits, circumstances, or energy that are valuable in and of themselves or because they provide a means of obtaining or preserving valuable resources (Hobfoll, 2001). According to (Dewe & Cooper, 2020) his model provides a useful heuristic that puts resources at the center of the stress process, recognizes their capacity for explanation, and advances our knowledge of coping. We look at grit because of the theoretical significance attributed to personal resources in the stressor-to-strain connection. We propose that in the context of incivility at the workplace, grit may provide the buffer necessary to preserve employee resources and protect him/her from facing burnout. Gritty employees are better equipped to endure challenging situations and are less likely to experience burnout.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

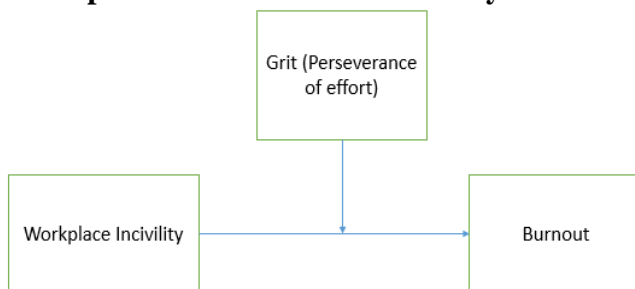


Figure 1. Grit is moderating the relationship between Workplace Incivility and Burnout among Human Service Professionals.

The present study aims to investigate the protective role of effort perseverance against negative outcomes (burnout) of workplace incivility. It was an effort to address a significant problem that exists in the field of human services. As literature revealed burnout is a prevalent issue among human service professionals due to heavy emotional demands inquisit by their work. Burnout in return could result in a negative outcome and deteriorate employee well-being, hence the quality of care services provided by human service professionals to their clients is also affected

negatively. It is also evident that workplace incivility (rude and disrespectful behaviour) is a pervasive and under-reported issue across different organizations and industries including human services. It could bring a negative working environment and employees experiencing workplace incivility can also experience low job satisfaction and stress. Effort and perseverance can make us able to persist in the face of challenges. Therefore it is considered as a protective factor against burnout. Hence, the dynamics of this trait with workplace incivility could provide us with observation of grit or resilience coping mechanisms for human service professionals. Present study results can help future researchers to develop interventions and policies that can reduce burnout among the target sample. Besides this, the organization may devise targeted training programs to improve or boost resilience-based coping mechanisms in the workforce by highlighting the role of effort perseverance. Present research can also contribute to the expansion of the literature on burnout and workplace incivility within human services. It adds on the sparking insight into the targeted field and sets the ground for future research by investigating the dynamics between individual characteristics and organizational factors.

Method

Research design

A cross-sectional correlational research design was employed to address the objectives of the current study. Data were collected from human service professionals at a single point in time using a convenience sampling technique.

Objectives

The present study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between workplace incivility, burnout, and grit among human service professionals.
2. To investigate the moderating role of grit in the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout among human service professionals.

Hypotheses

Based on the objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Workplace incivility is positively associated with burnout, whereas grit is negatively associated with burnout among human service professionals.
2. Workplace incivility is a significant positive predictor of burnout in human service professionals.
3. Grit moderates the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout, such that higher levels of grit reduce the impact of workplace incivility on burnout.

Sample

This cross-sectional study sample comprised 545 human service professionals, including university faculty members and medical practitioners, recruited from public and private sector institutions in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The sample included 184 males and 358 females, with 3 missing gender responses ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.47$). Participants ranged in age from 25 to 50 years ($M = 31.95$, $SD = 6.82$). Inclusion criteria required participants to have a minimum of one year of professional experience. Individuals undergoing psychotherapy, long-term medication, or with a diagnosed medical condition were excluded from the study.

Instruments

Following instruments utilized in present study.

Workplace incivility scale. We used newly developed workplace incivility scale in current study that was based on the definition given by (Martin & Hine, 2005). It has fourty items in total with alpha reliability 0.96 and six factors namely Professional Disparagement includes eight items with $\alpha = 0.88$, Workplace disruption has four items with $\alpha = 0.81$, Communication Misconduct includes seven item with $\alpha = 0.88$, Workplace Discourtesy includes eight items with $\alpha = 0.89$, Workplace Disrespect includes nine items with $\alpha = 0.91$ and Intrusive Behavior includes four items with $\alpha = 0.79$. The WIS has good reliability index. All items were positively scored. It has five response options (Never=1 to very often = 5) and score ranged from 40-200.

BSM-10 short version. It was developed by Maslach-Pines (2005). This instrument has 10 items with five point scoring options (Never =1 to Always = 5). Tool has reported alpha reliability as 0.87 previously. It is unidimensional, has no factors. In current study alpha reliability was also reported as 0.87. No item was negatively scored. Score range was 10-50.

Grit-S scale. Perseverance and passion for long term goal was measured through the factor perseverance of effort in short grit scale developed by (Duckworth et al., 2009). It has shown reliability index of 0.80 previously. In current study it has depicted reliability index of 0.78. It has five response options (strongly disagree =1 to strongly agree = 5). All items were positively scored.

Procedure

After finalization of the instruments 545 human service professionals including both males and females (Teachers at college, school and university level, and Professionals from medical field like Doctors, nurse, medical ab technicians, dentists) were recruited conveniently from public and private schools, colleges, universities and medical facilities of Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Pakistan. Prior to data collection, the appropriate institutional review board granted ethical approval, and each subject provided informed consent. The workplace incivility scale (created by the study's author), the burnout short measure (BSM-10) created by Maslach-Pine (2005), and the grit short scale (Grit-S) created by (Duckworth et al., 2009) were the tools used to collect data. Each question was to be answered honestly and as best as possible by the participants. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Data collection took approximately (15-20 minutes). Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and Process-Macro by Andrew-Hayes.

Results

In order to meet the study objectives descriptive statistics including alpha reliabilities of the tools, Mean, Standard Deviation, Range (potential, actual), skewness, kurtosis, correlation analysis, moderation analysis, slop analysis, mod graphs were calculated and presented.

The table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the study variables. The variables exhibit varying levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .78 to .96, indicating good to excellent reliability. Mean scores range from 8.54 to 92.39, reflecting differences in the average responses across variables. Standard deviations

range from 3.53 to 35.82, indicating variability in responses around the mean. Skewness values range from -0.79 to 1.09, and Kurtosis values range from -0.85 to 0.72 indicating the normal distribution of scores.

The correlation table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients between variables of the study. Workplace incivility significant positively correlated with all of its subscales and burnout, whereas significant negatively correlated with grit. Similarly Grit is significantly negatively correlated with Burnout. Indicating that higher levels of workplace incivility are associated with higher levels of Burnout and low level of grit. All correlations reported are statistically significant at $p < .01$, indicating a high level of confidence in the observed relationships.

Moderation analysis for Effort Perseverance along with predictors workplace incivility total, and its subscales Professional Disparagement, Workplace disruption, Communication misconduct, workplace discourtesy, workplace disrespect, intrusive behaviour explained 11% , 12%, 11%, and 8 % , variances respectively in predicting outcome burnout. Overall model was significant as $F = 23.18, 25.74, 22.56, 15.42$ respectively and $p < .05$. These values explaining substantial amount of variances explained through interaction effect.

Slope analysis when professional disparagement is a predictor revealed when Effort Perseverance is low (-1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Professional Disparagement and burnout, $b = .24, t = 3.48, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.10, .38]$. At the mean of Effort Perseverance, there is a significant positive relationship between Professional Disparagement and burnout, $b = .37, t = 7.69, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.27, .46]$. When Effort Perseverance is high (+1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Professional Disparagement and burnout, $b = .45, t = 6.79, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.33, .59]$.

Slope analysis when workplace disruption is a predictor revealed that when Effort Perseverance is low (-1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between workplace disruption and burnout, $b = .43, t = 3.97, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.22, .65]$. At the mean of Effort Perseverance, there is a significant positive relationship between workplace disruption and burnout, $b = .60, t = 7.96, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.45, .75]$. When Effort Perseverance is high (+1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between workplace disruption and burnout, $b = .77, t = .10, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.56, .98]$.

Slope analysis with predictor communication misconduct revealed that when Effort Perseverance is low (-1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Communication Misconduct and burnout, $b = .24, t = 3.00, p = .002, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.08, .39]$. At the mean of Effort Perseverance, there is a significant positive relationship between Communication Misconduct and burnout, $b = .41, t = 7.54, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.30, .51]$. When Effort Perseverance is high (+1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Communication Misconduct and burnout, $b = .53, t = .682, p < .001, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.38, .69]$.

Slope analysis with predictor workplace discourtesy revealed that when Effort Perseverance is low (-1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Workplace Discourtesy and burnout, $b = .14, t = 2.05, p = .04, 95\% \text{ BCa CI } [.01, .28]$. At the mean of Effort Perseverance, there is a significant positive relationship Workplace Discourtesy and

Table 1

Psychometric properties of the workplace incivility, its subscales, perseverance of effort scale and burnout scale (N = 545)

<i>Sr no</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range		Skewness	Kurtosis
						Potential	Actual		
1	WPI	40	.96	92.39	35.82	40-200	40-195	.75	.03
2	PD	8	.88	15.10	6.65	8-40	8-40	.88	.13
3	WD	4	.81	9.08	4.11	4-20	4-20	.45	-.85
4	CM	7	.88	13.00	5.96	7-35	7-35	1.06	.72
5	WDC	8	.89	14.03	6.57	8-40	8-40	1.09	.44
6	WDR	9	.91	17.04	7.95	9-45	9-45	.89	.10
7	IB	4	.79	8.54	3.65	4-20	4-20	.77	.03
8	EF	4	.78	14.87	3.53	4-20	4-20	-.79	.36
9	BO	10	.87	24.78	7.68	10-50	10-50	.16	-.03

Note. WPI= Workplace Incivility, PD=Professional Disparagement, WD=Workplace Disruption, CM=Communication Misconduct, WDC=Workpace Discourtesy, WDR=Workplace Disrespect, IB=Intrusive Behavior, EF = Effort Perseverance, BO=Burnout.

Table 2

Correlation between all scales and subscales of study variables (N = 545).

<i>Sr no</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
1	WPI	-	.91**	.74**	.87**	.88**	.91**	.68**	-.20**	.36**
2	PD		-	.63**	.78**	.77**	.80**	.55**	-.17**	.32**
3	WD			-	.54**	.61**	.66**	.51**	-.08*	.33**
4	CM				-	.73**	.74**	.56**	-.20**	.31**
5	WDC					-	.77**	.50**	-.26**	.25**
6	WDR						-	.56**	-.20**	.34**
7	IB							-	-.03	.31**
8	EF								-	-.11**
9	BO									-

Note. WPI= Workplace Incivility, PD=Professional Disparagement, WD=Workplace Disruption, CM=Communication Misconduct, WDC=Workpace Discourtesy, WDR=Workplace Disrespect, IB=Intrusive Behavior, EF = Effort Perseverance, BO=Burnout, *** $p < .000$. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$

Table 3

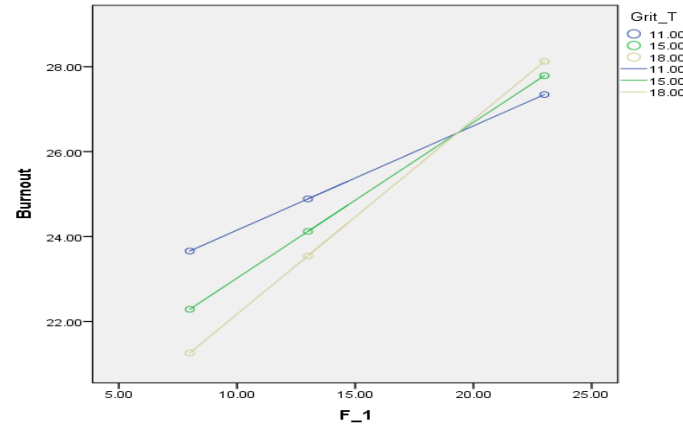
Moderating effect of Grit between Workplace Incivility and its Subscales (Professional Disparagement, Workplace Disruption, Communication Misconduct, Workplace Discourtesy, Workplace Disrespect, Intrusive Behavior) and Burnout (N=545).

	<i>b</i>	<i>SEB</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	28.13 [21.24, 35.02]	3.51	8.02	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.59 [-1.03, -.14]	.23	-2.59	$p = .009$
Professional Disparagement	-.09 [-.51, .33]	.21	-.41	$p = .683$
Grit*Professional Disparagement	.03 [.00, .06]	.01	2.21	$p < .05$
Constant	24.85 [24.24, 25.46]	.31	80.14	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.19 [-.36, -.02]	.09	-2.18	$p < .001$
Workplace Disruption	.60 [.45, .75]	.08	7.96	$p < .05$
Grit* Workplace Disruption	.05 [.00, .09]	.02	2.13	$p < .05$
Constant	29.55 [22.69, 36.42]	3.49	8.46	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.66 [-1.10, -.22]	.23	-2.92	$p = .004$
Communication Misconduct	-.23 [-.71, .25]	.25	-.93	$p = .354$
Grit*Communication Misconduct	.04 [.01, .07]	.02	2.56	$p < .05$
Constant	31.11 [24.32, 37.91]	3.46	8.99	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.69 [-1.13, -.25]	.22	-3.09	$p = .002$
Workplace Discourtesy	-.29 [-.71, .12]	.21	-1.41	$p = .158$
Grit*Workplace Discourtesy	.04 [.01, .07]	.01	2.79	$p < .05$
Constant	24.90 [24.28, 25.52]	.31	79.14	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.12 [-.29, .06]	.09	-1.32	$p < .001$
Workplace Disrespect	.33 [.25, .41]	.04	8.23	$p < .001$
Grit*Workplace Disrespect	.02 [-.00, .04]	.01	1.88	$p = .060$
Constant	28.47 [21.89, 35.06]	3.35	8.49	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.62 [-1.05, -.19]	.22	-2.86	$p < .05$
Intrusive Behavior	-.04 [-.76, .68]	.37	-.11	$p = .911$
Grit*Intrusive Behavior	.05 [-.00, .09]	.02	1.95	$p = .052$
Constant	24.95 [24.34, 25.56]	.31	79.92	$p < .001$
Effort Perseverance	-.09 [-.27, .078]	.09	-1.08	$p = .279$
Workplace Incivility	.08 [.06, .09]	.01	8.84	$p < .001$
Grit*Workplace Incivility	.01 [.00, .01]	.00	2.55	$p < .05$

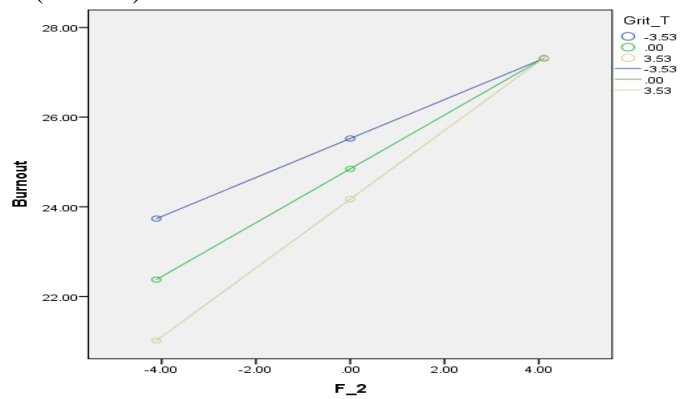
Note. $p < .000$, $p < .01$, $p < .05$

Figure 2

Graphical Representation of the Moderating Effect of Effort Perseverance between Professional Disparagement and Burnout (N=545).

**Figure 3**

Graphical Representation of the Moderating Effect of Effort Perseverance between Workplace Disruption and Burnout (N=545).

**Figure 4**

Graphical Representation of the Moderating Effect of Effort Perseverance between Communication Misconduct and Burnout (N=545).

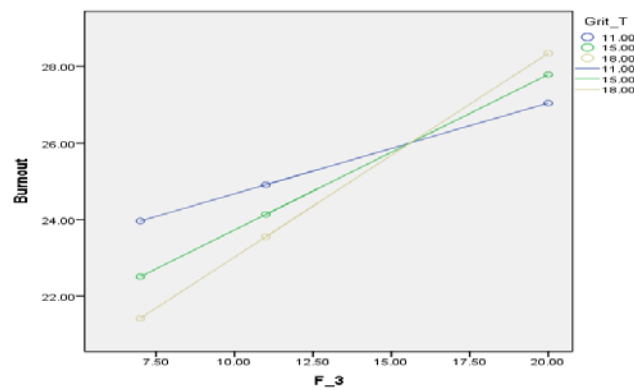
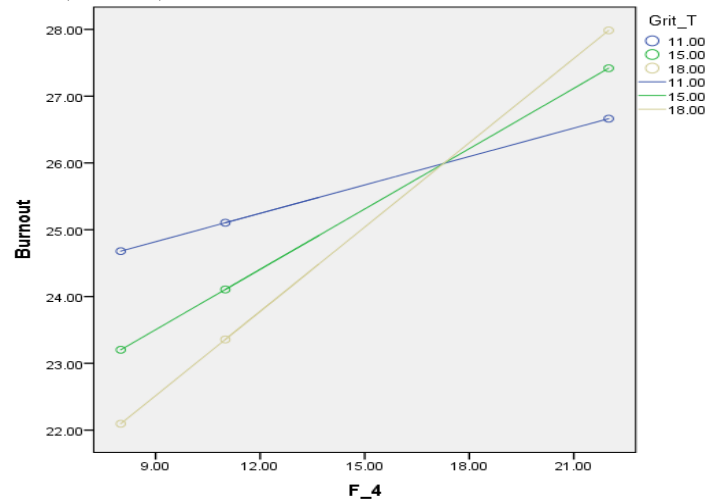
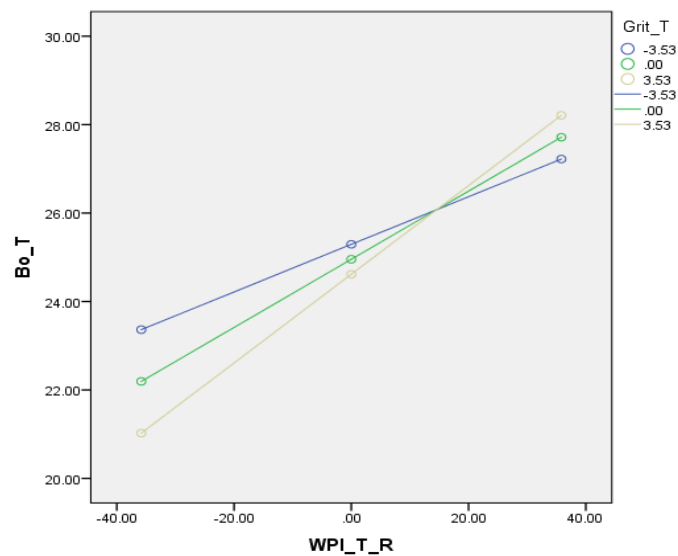


Figure 5

Graphical Representation of the Moderating Effect of Effort Perseverance between Workplace Discourtesy and Burnout (N=545).

**Figure 6**

Graphical Representation of the Moderating Effect of Effort Perseverance between Workplace Incivility and Burnout (N=545).



burnout, $b = .30$, $t = 5.91$, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [.20, .40]. When Effort Perseverance is high (+1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between Workplace Discourtesy and burnout, $b = .42$, $t = 5.82$, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [.28, .56].

It was also evident that when Effort Perseverance is low (-1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between workplace incivility and burnout, $b = .05$, $t = 4.38$, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [.03, .08]. At the mean of Effort Perseverance, there is a significant positive relationship between workplace Incivility and burnout, $b = 0.78$, $t = 8.84$, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [.06, .09]. When Effort Perseverance is high (+1SD), there is a significant positive relationship between workplace incivility and burnout, $b = .10$, $t = 7.76$, $p < .001$, 95% BCa CI [.07, .12]. It holds true for those who have experienced workplace incivility and scored low, moderate or high on Effort Perseverance will be experience less burnout at workplace. Moreover Johnson-Nayman test show that if the moderator value will be in range between -6.31-5.13 then it will moderate significant positively the predictor and outcome relationship.

It holds true for those who scored high on Professional Disparagement, workplace disruption, communication misconduct, workplace discourtesy and scored high on Effort Perseverance experience less burnout at workplace. Table 3 also demonstrated the role of Grit between Workplace Disrespect and Burnout, and between intrusive behaviour and burnout. The interaction effect of Effort Perseverance and Workplace disrespect, the interaction effect of Effort Perseverance and intrusive behaviour were non-significant. However, the results also show significant association between Workplace Disrespect, Effort Perseverance and burnout, and association between intrusive behaviour, Effort Perseverance and burnout but this did not account for any significant results of moderation (see Table 3; Figures 2–5).

Discussion

The present study reveals that effort perseverance could play a moderating role in the relationship between workplace incivility total score, its subscales professional disparagement, workplace disruption, communication misconduct, workplace discourtesy and outcome variable burnout among human service professionals. Individuals high in effort perseverance may possess the resilience and determination to withstand challenges. Gritty individuals are more likely to use flexible coping mechanisms, such reaching out for social support, reframing negative experiences, and focusing on long-term goals, which can buffer the negative effects of total workplace incivility score and its subscales professional disparagement, workplace disruption, communication misconduct, workplace discourtesy on burnout. Effort perseverance may serve as a protective factor by enhancing individuals' resilience and determination to persevere in the face of adversity.

These results are consistent with previous study results. Gritty individuals are more likely to employ effective coping strategies when confronted with challenges in the workplace. Individuals high in effort perseverance are more resilient and adaptable in the face of adversity, effectively coping with stressors and maintaining psychological well-being (Kabat-Farr et al., 2019). In a similar vein, resilient professionals are more likely to see communication difficulties as brief setbacks rather than

insurmountable roadblocks, allowing them to overcome hardship and preserve psychological health. (Duckworth et al., 2009). Previous studies explained that constant exposure to discourteous behaviour undermines morale, fosters negative emotions, and leads to emotional exhaustion, an essential piece of burnout (Schilpzand et al., 2016). Effort perseverance enhances individuals' motivation and engagement in their work, even in challenging environments. Studies consistently demonstrate a positive association between workplace incivility and burnout among human service professionals. Prolonged exposure to incivility undermines emotional resilience, exacerbates stress levels, and contributes to emotional exhaustion (e.g; Lim, Cortina & Magley, 2008).

The present study shows that effort perseverance could not moderate the effect of predictor subscales of workplace incivility workplace disrespect and intrusive behavior on burnout. The following are the plausible reasons why grit may not effectively do so. Firstly, If the level of workplace disrespect is severe or pervasive, even individuals high in grit may struggle to cope effectively, effort perseverance may not be sufficient to counteract the detrimental effects of consistent and severe disrespect, leading to burnout despite individuals' perseverance. Secondly, Workplace disrespect often involves interactions with others, over which individuals may have limited control. Effort perseverance may be more effective in situations where individuals can take proactive steps to address challenges, but in cases of disrespectful behaviour from colleagues or supervisors, the lack of control over others' actions may limit the protective effects of grit. Thirdly, Workplace disrespect can elicit strong emotional reactions, such as anger, frustration, or hurt. While effort perseverance may enhance individuals' resilience, it may not fully mitigate the emotional toll of disrespectful behaviour, particularly if it is prolonged or targeted. Individuals may still experience emotional exhaustion and other burnout symptoms despite their perseverance. Lastly, the prevailing organizational culture can influence the effectiveness of grit as a moderator. In environments where disrespect is normalized or even tacitly condoned, individuals may face greater challenges in maintaining their resilience and motivation. Grit may be less effective in mitigating burnout in cultures that do not prioritize respect and collaboration.

Moreover, the reasons why grit or effort perseverance could not buffer the relationship between workplace intrusive behaviour and burnout among human service professionals are the following. Firstly, workplace intrusive behaviour often involves violations of personal or professional boundaries, which can be difficult to navigate even for individuals high in grit. Grit may not fully protect individuals from the negative consequences of boundary violations, as intrusive behaviour can lead to feelings of invasion, helplessness, and loss of control. Secondly, intrusive behaviour can disrupt work-life balance and contribute to role overload or conflict. While grit may enhance individuals' resilience in managing work-related challenges, it may not address the broader implications of intrusive behaviour on their personal lives. Burnout may still occur due to the cumulative strain of intrusive demands on various aspects of an individual's well-being. Thirdly, dealing with intrusive behaviour can be mentally draining, regardless of one's level of grit. Constant vigilance,

boundary-setting, and emotional regulation in response to intrusive demands can deplete individuals' psychological resources over time, leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Lastly, even individuals high in grit have finite resources to cope with stressors. Workplace intrusive behaviour may tax individuals' coping resources to the point where grit alone is insufficient to prevent burnout. Without adequate organizational support or interventions to address intrusive behaviour, individuals may succumb to burnout despite their perseverance. In short, while grit is a valuable trait associated with resilience and perseverance, there are limitations to its effectiveness in moderating the relationship between workplace disrespect, workplace intrusive behaviour, and burnout.

Recognizing the moderating role of effort perseverance can inform interventions aimed at mitigating burnout among human service professionals. Strategies that enhance grit, such as fostering a growth mindset, setting realistic goals, and providing support and encouragement, may help individuals better navigate professional disparagement and maintain their well-being in challenging work environments. Strategies that enhance effort perseverance, such as fostering a growth mindset, goal-setting, and resilience training, may help individuals better cope with and adapt to workplace disruptions, thereby reducing the likelihood of burnout. Factors such as the severity of disrespect or intrusion, individual coping resources, and organizational context can influence the degree to which grit mitigates burnout in these contexts. Therefore, interventions aimed at addressing workplace disrespect and intrusive behaviour should consider a multi-faceted approach that includes organizational policies, supportive environments, and individual coping strategies, in addition to cultivating grit among professionals.

Novel Contributions

This study provides novel insights into the complex relationship between workplace incivility and burnout among human service professionals, highlighting the moderating role of effort perseverance, a core component of grit. Theoretically, it extends existing burnout models by integrating grit as a resilience-enhancing trait that may buffer specific stressors. Practically, the findings underscore the importance of developing workplace interventions focused on enhancing employee grit through goal-setting, resilience training, and fostering a growth mindset, particularly in professions prone to high emotional labor. However, it also reveals the limitations of individual traits in mitigating the effects of chronic disrespect and intrusive behaviors, emphasizing the need for supportive organizational cultures. Methodologically, the use of subscale-level analysis of workplace incivility offers a more nuanced understanding of its dimensions and their differential impacts on burnout. Overall, the study advances both scholarly and applied understanding of how personality strengths interact with workplace stressors to influence well-being.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study provides a snapshot of data only at a single point in time, so it was difficult to establish causality between variables. It only provides us a static view

of the relationships between the study variables. Due to static nature findings may not be generalizable beyond the specific population. Future researchers should be mindful of these limitations and consider alternative study designs to complement their findings and strengthen causal inference. In future studies, it is recommended to explore additional potential mediators and moderators to enhance our understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Conclusion

The present study contributes to the growing body of literature on workplace well-being by exploring the moderating role of effort perseverance a key dimension of grit—in the relationship between workplace incivility and burnout among human service professionals. Findings reveal that while grit can buffer the negative impact of certain forms of incivility, such as professional disparagement and communication misconduct, it is less effective against chronic disrespect and intrusive behavior. These results underscore the dual importance of fostering individual resilience and addressing systemic workplace challenges. Enhancing grit through targeted interventions may help professionals better manage workplace adversity, yet organizational policies that promote respect, boundary protection, and supportive environments are equally crucial. By integrating psychological and organizational perspectives, this study offers valuable implications for burnout prevention strategies. It further highlights the need for future longitudinal research to establish causal pathways and explore other personal and environmental moderators that can strengthen employee well-being in demanding professional settings.

Ethical Consideration

The study was approved by Department of Applied Psychology, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, Pakistan. Consent Form was taken before taking data and participants were asked to take voluntary participation.

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Availability of data and materials

The data sets used and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Authors' contributions/Author details

This article is derived from the PhD dissertation of Saba Zer Naz Hafsa, conducted under the supervision of Professor Anis-ul-Haque. Arooj Fatima Mazhar, Syeda Rabia Shaheen, and Mehwish Ishfaq contributed to the study's design, data analysis, and report writing.

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