



Return to Civilized Country: Islamic Religious Values and Collectivist Culture as Suppressors of Workplace Incivility in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research focuses on workplace incivility in Indonesia, a country with collectivist cultural values and a Muslim majority. Using qualitative methods with in-depth interviews with employees in several companies in Indonesia, a collectivist country with a Muslim majority. The data obtained were analyzed to identify key themes related to perceptions and responses to workplace incivility. The results showed that collectivist cultural values and Islamic teachings have a significant influence on how employees respond to workplace incivility. Based on the perspective of collectivist values, employees tend to be more tolerant of mild workplace incivility behavior due to their desire to maintain harmony and avoid conflict. However, on the other hand, based on the perspective of Islamic religious values, more serious workplace incivility behavior that violates religious norms is more likely to be responded to with reprimands based on Islamic religious values. These findings provide practical implications for management in considering the cultural and religious context in responding to workplace incivility behavior. Training programs that emphasize the importance of collectivism and work ethic values based on Islamic religious values can help reduce incidents of workplace incivility and strengthen a harmonious work culture that is conducive to performance.

Keywords: Workplace Incivility, Collectivism, Islam, Moslem, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

A study conducted by Irawanto, (2009) regarding the cultural values of Indonesian society stated that Indonesian people, based on Hofstede, (1980), were characterized by high collectivism cultural values, which were characterized by low individualism values with a value of 5. In addition, Irawanto, (2009) also stated that based on The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) study, which is an international project intended to study differences in leadership from a cross-cultural perspective conducted by Robert House, stated that Indonesia has a high collectivism cultural value of 4.54.

Another interesting thing in Irawanto's (2009) study stated that Indonesia has a humanitarian orientation score of 4.69. This value is the highest value of all countries on the dimension of humanitarian orientation, and thus Indonesians are described as friendly, peace-loving, open-handed, concerned about the effects of their actions on feelings others, being careful not to disappoint others, showing concern for others, being tolerant of mistakes, generosity, and sensitivity towards others.

On the other hand, Indonesia is a country with the largest Muslim population in the world, namely 229 million people. Islamic teachings place great emphasis on the importance of relationships with God and relationships with fellow human beings. This of course includes maintaining ethics and morals in social interactions in the workplace.

Research conducted by Handoyo et al., (2018) regarding workplace incivility behavior in Indonesia found surprising results. Handoyo et al., (2018) in their research stated that 88% of research respondents experienced workplace incivility behavior. Handoyo et al., (2018)'s research also provides confirmation in the form of empirical evidence that workplace incivility has occurred in Indonesia, a country with high collectivism cultural values, the highest values of humanitarian orientation, and the country with the largest Muslim population in the world.

This study highlights the possible abandonment of the cultural values of high collectivism and Islamic religious values embraced by the world's largest Muslim population, Indonesia. This study seeks to re-explore the roles of both in efforts to reduce workplace incivility in Indonesia.

1. Workplace Incivility

Workplace incivility refers to research by Andersson & Pearson (1999) as rude, impolite, disrespectful, demeaning behavior, which is often ambiguous, taken for granted, but has a significant impact on the work environment and can damage employee psychology.

There are many negative impacts caused by workplace incivility, including reducing job satisfaction and reducing employee productivity (Cortina et al., 2001), making employees feeling underappreciated, which leads to decreased motivation and employee engagement (Porath & Pearson, 2013; Cortina, et al., 2001). Workplace incivility can also cause employee silence (Gustiawan, et al., 2003), increased emotional exhaustion and decreased job embeddedness (Gustiawan, et al., 2023), and the negative impact of workplace incivility will be especially felt in economically weak groups (Gustiawan, et al., 2023).

2. Collectivism

Geert Hofstede, through his studies in 1980, identified cultural dimensions that differentiate one country or cultural group from another. One such dimension is Individualism versus Collectivism. Collectivist countries like Indonesia according to Hofstede (1980) have characteristics group interests and goals take precedence over individual interests. A person's identity is determined by their relationship with other group members, individuals tend to identify themselves as part of a particular group, social status is very important, loyalty to the group is considered very important, group members are expected to show high loyalty and obey group rules and norms, strong social relationships and mutual support among group members

are emphasized, decisions and actions are often discussed and mutually agreed upon to maintain group harmony and stability, and conflict is avoided as much as possible to maintain group harmony, and communication tends to be indirect and more subtle to avoid direct confrontation and maintain harmonious relationships. Thus, it is worth noting that societies with collectivist cultures pay great attention to maintaining good relations, avoiding confrontation, and maintaining harmonious relationships.

Research by Lim and Lee (2011) shows that in collectivist cultures, employees tend to be more tolerant of mild disrespectful behavior and focus more on maintaining group harmony rather than responding with hostility or conflict. This shows that collectivist values can mitigate the negative effects of workplace incivility.

3. Islam

Research by Ali and Al-Owaidan (2008) states that Islamic work ethics can encourage employees to act with integrity and mutual respect, which is an antidote to unfair and degrading behavior such as workplace incivility. Ali's (2014) research suggests that employees who uphold Islamic values are more likely to avoid unethical behavior, including workplace incivility, and are more likely to respond to workplace incivility in a wise manner. Islam teaches principles that regulate the relationship between humans and God and fellow humans (Abeng, 1997; Rice, 1999; Beekun & Badawi, 2005; Ali & Al-Owaidan, 2008; Iqbal & Lewis, 2009; Ahmad, 2011; Ali, 2014).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach using interviews. Data was collected through interviews with 200 employees from various industrial sectors in Indonesia. The results of the interviews concluded that the cultural values of collectivism and the values of Islamic teachings emphasize a work culture that is harmonious and conducive to performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the cultural values of collectivism and Islamic teachings significantly influence the way employees respond to workplace incivility. Based on the collectivism value perspective, there are employees who tend to be more tolerant of mild workplace incivility behavior because of the desire to avoid confrontation and maintain harmony. However, on the other hand, based on the perspective of Islamic religious values, more serious workplace incivility behavior that violates religious norms is more likely to be responded to with a reprimand based on Islamic religious values. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Ali and Al-Owaidan (2008) which stated that the principles of Islamic values such as honesty, justice and kindness can encourage a more ethical and respectful work environment. On the other hand, Ali's (2014) research found that employees who uphold Islamic values are more likely to avoid unethical behavior, including workplace incivility, and are more likely to respond to workplace incivility in a wise manner. This indicates that Islamic religious values can help reduce the frequency and negative impact of workplace incivility. This research also supports research conducted by Ahmad (2011) which stated that employees who have a high level of Islamic work ethics show a lower negative impact from workplace incivility.

These findings indicate that Indonesian collectivist cultural values and Islamic religious values can be mitigating factors for the occurrence of workplace incivility and the negative impact of workplace incivility. The cultural values of collectivism, which emphasize cooperation, strong social relationships, and maintaining harmonious relationships, can help employees to prevent workplace incivility, as can the values of the Islamic religion which emphasizes good relationships with God and fellow humans. Management can take advantage of these findings

by promoting a work culture that prioritizes collectivist cultural values and Islamic religious teachings to prevent and reduce the negative impact of workplace incivility.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study confirms that uncivilized behavior in the workplace can be prevented by reviving the cultural values of collectivism and Islamic religious values. This shows the importance of implementing the cultural values of collectivism and Islamic religious values in the context of human resource management in all organizations in Indonesia. The practical implication of this study is the need to develop programs and policies that promote the cultural values of collectivism and re-emphasize the implementation of Islamic religious values for the Muslim population in Indonesia to strengthen a harmonious work culture, free from uncivilized behavior in the workplace so that it is conducive to performance.

Limitations

This research was only conducted in Jakarta. Further research is expected to be conducted in many cities in Indonesia. Research on other religions is also open, while this research only highlights Islam. It can be a recommendation for future research.

Research Implications

These findings provide practical implications for management in considering the cultural and religious context in responding to workplace incivility. Training programs that emphasize the importance of collectivism values and work ethics based on Islamic religious values can help reduce incidents of workplace incivility and strengthen a harmonious and performance-conducive work culture. The theoretical implication is to design certain policies or actions based on collectivism and religious values, so that Indonesian human resources have a better understanding of normative and moral actions.

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