Role of Workplace Cyber Incivility and Personality Traits on Employee Knowledge Sharing Behaviour

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Abstract - Knowledge sharing behaviour can achieve a greater level of innovation and creativity. Employees who were victimized with computer-mediated workplace incivility may hinder knowledge with rational justifications. The purpose of this paper is to identify the role of workplace cyber incivility on knowledge sharing behaviour. Additionally, this study identifies the mediating effect of personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience) on the relationship between them. The study is predominantly designed as a quantitative study based on the positivistic paradigm. Data were obtained from an online self-administered questionnaire from permanent employees in software development organizations in Sri Lanka, and 251 responses were analysed using correlation and SEM bootstrapping. The study draws attention towards workplace cyber incivility victims, who may negatively respond to knowledge sharing behaviour, creating hostile work environments. The theory of trait activation can be used to explain the individual differences of the said relationship. The study also proposes partial mediation on the same relationship. The findings of the study have several theoretical and practical implications. It advocates the necessity to address workplace cyber incivility to ensure employee knowledge sharing behaviour.

Keywords: knowledge sharing behaviour, cyber incivility, personality traits

I. INTRODUCTION

In this prodigiously turbulent and dynamic world, organizations are striving to achieve a competitive advantage. Organizations achieve a competitive edge by developing and using knowledge and information which in return develop products, services, ideas, and information. Knowledge is a strategic asset (gain through continuous learning) for any organization to boost the efficiency and ability of the decision-making process (Issac, et al., 2020). Knowledge sharing behaviour (KSB) can be identified as the transmission of explicit and tacit knowledge from knowledge providers to receivers (Bock, et al., 2005; Lin & Huang, 2020). In particular, tacit knowledge is the most important knowledge to win the battle (Meulenbroek, et al., 2018). Therefore, organizations onboard employee those who are rich in knowledge sharing behaviour. However, employees do not share knowledge as expected which is puzzling (Bock, et al., 2005).

In this study, we purport that cyber incivility could be the reason to hinder knowledge sharing behaviour. Modern technology has been led the way of communication in the organization to an electronic communication system that is easy, efficient, and speedy. Besides, emails are the most preferred and commonly used mode of communication in organizations. Yet, emails can be a double-edged sword due to non-face-to-face communication (Lim & Chin, 2006); examples of such behaviours are hurting comments, gossips, irritable emails, and short or no response for emails. This can be identified as cyber uncivilized practices in organizations. When employees are disregard or mistreated it will affect their psychological wellbeing. Hence, that prevents employees from sharing knowledge with others; especially between supervisors and co-workers.

Knowledge hiding between supervisors and co-workers has diverged victim to victim based on their individual differences through their experience of cyber incivility. In this study we concentrate mostly on an ignored individual

aspect in knowledge sharing literature: we examine which personality trait plays as a mediator in cyber incivility and KSB. Most previous studies focusing on the facilitators of KSB, yet there is less research on barriers to KSB (Farrukh, et al., 2018). There is a growing concern to identify possible barriers for KSB, hence, we propose that workplace cyber incivility is one of the possible barriers for KSB. Therefore, the objectives of the study are twofold. First, we identify the impact of workplace cyber incivility on employee knowledge sharing behaviour. There is a dearth of research focusing on cyber incivility and individual-level knowledge sharing behaviour. Second, investigating the role of personality traits as a mediating factor between cyber incivility and KSB.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A. Knowledge sharing behaviour

Knowledge is a most valuable intangible asset which expedites competitive advantage, change, and expansion of Information Technology (IT). There are two dimensions of knowledge (1) explicit; facts, rules, and policies that can be articulated and codified in writing or symbols which shared easily (Matzler, et al., 2008) and (2) implicit; the knowledge which is embodied in practices and routine which is difficult to share. Knowledge sharing is decisive for companies to develop knowledge, skills, attitude for creativity and innovation. Therefore, KSB can be defined as "the degree of one's positive feelings about sharing one's knowledge" (Bock, et al., 2005). This is a conscious behaviour (voluntary, proactive, behavioural awareness) shaped by the culture, ethics, and code of conduct of the organization (Lin & Huang, 2020).

There are a contextual, group, and individual antecedents which affect the KSB such as, technical, procedural justice, creativity, shared norms, personality, intrinsic motivation, and social capital (Shaari, et al., 2015). Nevertheless, there is less research on barriers for KSB such as workplace mistreatment and workplace incivility (Lin & Huang, 2020). Moreover, knowledge sharing behaviour is determined by an individual's personality traits (Farrukh, et al., 2018), knowledge sharing attitudes (employees may share knowledge when they perceive

pleasure and meaning for helping others, besides they reluctant to share knowledge when they perceive their knowledge is not important to others), subjective Norms (the degree to which subordinates and co-workers persuade to share knowledge through psychological contracts), and intention to share implicit/ explicit knowledge (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). Nevertheless, knowledge is considered as a source of power and fuel to obtain political mileage; employees deliberately hinder their knowledge in order to achieve individual competitive advantage (Issac, et al., 2020).

B. Cyber incivility

Workplace incivility is identified as any rude or discourteous behaviour that drives to psychological or physical consequences for both victims and bystanders of such behaviours, creating hostile workplaces. Particularly, workplace incivility can be defined as "low-intensity deviant behaviour in a workplace with ambiguous intent to harm the target, violating the social norm of mutual respect towards both individuals and organizations" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). There is research focusing on cyber harassment but less on cyber incivility (Lim & Teo, 2009). There is a growing concern to address cyber incivility because of the anonymity of the perpetrator. If managers overlook addressing cyber incivility, that may escalate to the next level of aggression. Cyber incivility can be defined as computer-mediated less severe detrimental behaviour that violates mutual respect and norms (Lim & Chin, 2006). Further, Lim and Teo (2009) stated that cyber incivility is electronic aggression that occurs in workplaces through email communication (Sharifirad, 2016). Researchers stated that abusive supervision and deviant behaviours can reduce KSB (Ahmad & Karim, 2019). Therefore, we have identified that cyber incivility is a predictor of knowledge-sharing behaviour. Victims may camouflage knowledge by playing dumb, evasive hiding, and justify their hiding behaviour (Irum, et al., 2019). This has led to our first hypotheses;

H1: there is a negative impact between workplace cyber incivility and KSB

C. Personality traits

Personality demonstrates individual differences based on their behaviour, cognition, and emotions which are conceptualized through personality traits. Personality traits are the intrinsically characteristics of a person that exposed as a particular pattern of demeanours for different situations. Personality traits can be defined as "the individual characteristics and behaviours, organized in a way that reflects the unique adjustment the person makes to his or her environment" (Barrick, et al., 2001). Personality traits of Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, and Openness to experience leads to certain kinds of attitudes and behaviours. This has led to our second hypotheses;

H2: there is a relationship between workplace cyber incivility personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience)

Extraversion includes traits such as convivial, loquacious, gregarious, assertive, active, zealous, and expressive who has a vigorous desire for the accolade, convivial apperception, status, and power. Extroverts may not be a victim of workplace cyber incivility because they have more positive social interactions. Therefore, we hypothesized that workplace cyber incivility may negatively relate to the extrovert trait.

H2A: there is a negative relationship between workplace cyber incivility and Extraversion

Agreeableness includes traits such as courteous, flexible, trusting, good-natured, cooperative, forgiving, soft-hearted, and tolerant. It is predicted that those who are high in agreeableness may less likely to be a victim of workplace cyber incivility. Therefore, we hypothesized that,

H2B: there is a negative relationship between workplace cyber incivility and Agreeableness

Conscientiousness personality type includes traits such as hardworking, meticulous, exhaustive, responsible, organized, and persevering. Further, these individuals are attention to detailed and spot the subtle deviations as uncivil. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between said variables. We hypothesized that;

H2C: there is a positive relationship between workplace cyber incivility and Conscientiousness

Neuroticism includes traits like apprehensive, dispirited, exasperated, disconcerted, emotional, worried, and insecure. Neurotic employees experience a greater deal of negative life experiences. Therefore, we hypothesized that;

H2D: there is a positive relationship between workplace cyber incivility and Neuroticism

Openness to experience includes traits like imaginative, cultured, curious, pristine, broad-minded, perspicacious, and artistically sensitive. Openness individuals are providing favourable responses for the absence of evidence for less detrimental behaviours. Therefore, we hypothesized that;

H2E: there is a negative relationship between workplace cyber incivility and Openness

A personality trait is a most studied individual-level predictor in KSB literature (Jadin, et al., 2017). Individuals with high agreeableness and consciousness traits are more likely to share knowledge among others (Matzler, et al., 2008). Knowledge sharing behaviour is a helpful social interaction; therefore, there is a positive relationship between Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to experience and KSB. Neuroticism This has led to our third hypotheses;

H3: there is a positive relationship between personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience) and KSB

Additionally, the Theory of Trait activation elucidates the individual traits are activated to respond to the situation (Tett, et al., 2013). Succinctly, traits and situations are the two-sided of the same coin. Determinately, we propose that personality traits mediate the relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB. This has led to the fourth hypothesis;

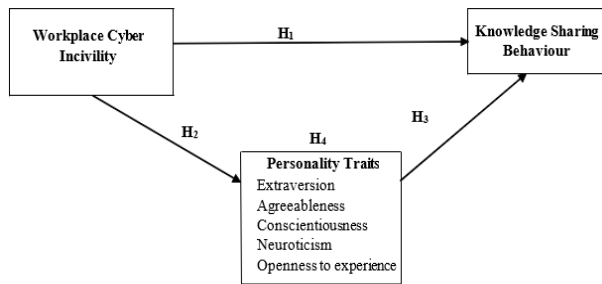H4: personality traits mediate the relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

Parametric assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and common method bias are met and the parametric test is fitting in this study. First, demographic data analysis is presented; the sample consisted of 62% male and 38% female employees. Besides, the sample represents a younger and educated population (below 25 represents 23%, 26 to 35 represents 31%, 36 to 40 represents 31, and more than 40s age group represents 25%) with 23% postgraduate, 59% bachelors, and 18% of professional qualifications. Ostensibly, there were fewer tenure employees due to the nature of the industry; 23% of the employees have more than 10 years of experience while the majority having 1 to 3 years of experience (43%) and 34% have 3 to 5 years of tenure in the same organization.

Table 1 indicates the descriptive output data; mean values for workplace cyber incivility, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience, and KSB are 2.90, 2.63, 3.13, 3.47, 3.40, 3.73, and 2.65 respectively. A low standard deviation indicates that the data points incline to be very proximate to the mean. However, KSB values are spread out over a substantial range.

Table 1 Means, standard deviations, correlations

	Construct	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	WCI	2.90	1.12	(0.86)						
2.	PE	2.63	1.13	.502**	(0.76)					
3.	PA	3.13	0.76	.0.42	.221**	(0.54)				
4.	PC	3.47	0.99	-.216**	-.310**	.681**	(0.98)			
5.	PN	3.4	0.95	-.193**	-.244**	.630**	.837**	(0.82)		
6.	PO	3.73	0.87	-.135*	-.200**	.551**	.687**	.748**	(0.82)	
7.	KSB	2.65	1.00	-.467**	.937**	.219**	.292**	.228**	.243**	(0.70)

Note: N = 251

WCI (workplace cyber incivility), PE (Extraversion), PA (Agreeableness), PC (Conscientiousness), PN (Neuroticism), PO (Openness to experience), and KSB (Knowledge Sharing Behaviour)

***p<0.001, **p< 0.01, *p< 0.05

The square root of AVE values is in diagonal parenthesis

There is a negative relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB (R= - 467). Consequently, personality traits demonstrated a positive relationship with KSB. There is a weaker relationship between cyber incivility and KSB (Table 1), this has led to identifying the missing link between cyber incivility, personality traits, and KSB.

A. Measurement Model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement scales. Table 1 average variance extracted (AVE) ensures convergent validity with greater than 0.5 output value. In this study, AVE ensures the convergent validity of the model which is demonstrated in figure 2. Conscientiousness had the highest discriminant validity among all the constructs. However, agreeableness and KSB did not achieve the threshold value for discriminant validity. However, we have achieved an optimum level of discriminant validity by sequentially removing items from the model. Measurement model fit indices were tested to check the fitness of the SEM model. The goodness of the fit indicates; x^2/df = 3.899, RMSEA = 0.108, CFI = 0.862, GFI = 0.705, and TLI = 0.849 ensures the best fit with output data. The goodness of fit indices ensures that the model is well fitted with the data.
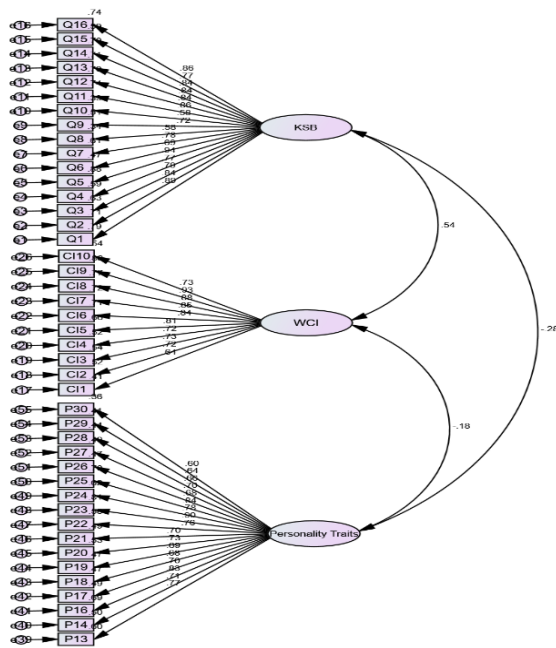
Figure 2 Confirmatory factor analysis

B. Structural Model

We have hypothesized a negative relationship between cyber incivility and KSB (H1); according to output data ensured a negative relationship (β= - 0.507, p = 0.00). It is argued that if employees experience cyber incivility behaviour by one unit, they may decrease or hinder their explicit and implicit KSB. Further, 26% of the KSB variations (R^2 = 0.26) can be explained through the selected cyber incivility behaviours.

To test the second hypothesis (H2); we have hypothesized that there is a relationship between workplace cyber incivility personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience). Output data for workplace cyber incivility ensures a (H2A) positive relationship with workplace cyber incivility and extraversion (β= 0.502, p = 0.000) and negative relationship with (H2C) workplace cyber incivility and conscientiousness (β= - 0.216, p = 0.000); (H2D) workplace cyber incivility and Neuroticism (β= - 0.193, p = 0.002), (H2E) workplace cyber incivility and Openness to experience (β= - 0.135, p = 0.031). Yet, there is no relationship between workplace cyber incivility and agreeableness (H2B).

To test the third hypothesis (H3); we have hypothesized that personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to

experience) positively relate with KSB. According to output data, extraversion ensures a positive relationship with KSB (β= 0.906, p = 0.000), rejecting all four-sub hypothesis. It is expected to increase 0.906 of KSB if we increase extraversion personality traits. Finally, we have hypothesized (H4) that personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience) mediate the relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB. We have used bootstrapping to test the mediation effect.

Table 2: Total Effect

Path	Direct effect	Indirect effect	Total effect
H4A: WCI→ PE → KSB	0.05	0.35	0.40
H4B WCI→ PA → KSB	0.04	0.06	Rejected
H4C: WCI→ PC → KSB	0.47	0.04	0.49
H4D: WCI→ PN → KSB	0.48	0.03	0.51
H4E: WCI→ PO → KSB	0.49	0.02	0.51

Note: N = 251

WCI (workplace cyber incivility), PE (Extraversion), PA (Agreeableness), PC (Conscientiousness), PN (Neuroticism), PO (Openness to experience), and KSB (Knowledge Sharing Behaviour)

According to table 2 output data; H4A is accepted and there is a partial mediation of 0.35 (β= 0.35, p = 0.08) and the mediation effect is significant under 95% of bootstrap confidence level. 37% of the KSB variations (R^2 = 0.37) can be explained through the extraversion mediation. Second, H4B rejected, there is no evidence to ensure mediation effect under 5% of bootstrap significant level (p = 0.51). Third, conscientiousness ensures a partial mediation between cyber incivility and KSB (β= 0.04, p = 0.002). further, 29% of the KSB variations (R^2 = 0.29) can be explained through conscientiousness mediation. Fourth, H4C ensures a partial mediation of 0.03 between Neuroticism and KSB (β= 0.03, p = 0.007) with significant bootstrapping. Moreover, 27% (R^2 = 0.27) of the KSB variations can be explained through Neuroticism and cyber incivility. Fifth, openness ensures a 0.02 (β= 0.02) of partial mediation between cyber incivility and KSB and the bootstrapping significance is 0.019 (P = 0.019). Moreover, 29% (R^2 = 0.29) of the KSB

variations can be explained through openness mediation. Finally, we can conclude that personality traits mediate the relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB. Succinctly, 89% ($R^2 = 0.88$) KSB variations can be explained through cyber incivility and personality traits (Figure 3).
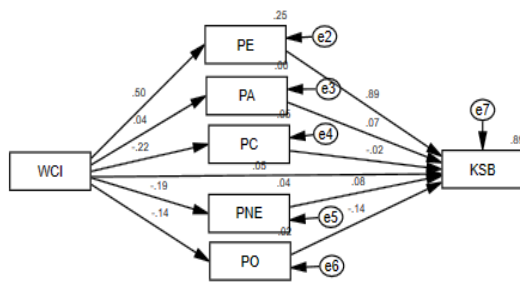

Figure 3: Results of the structural model for direct, and bootstrap indirect effect
Note: N = 251

V. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to identify the role of workplace cyber incivility and personality traits on KSB of IT sector employees in Sri Lanka. The first objective of our study was to identify the impact of workplace cyber incivility and KSB. The findings are consistent with the previous studies. When employees perceive workplace cyber incivility; they tend to hinder KSB (Farrukh, et al., 2018; Santoso & Anggraeni, 2020). Consequently, despite different initiation to encourage knowledge-sharing behaviours, employees may not share knowledge due to their personal barriers and situational factors (Anand, et al., 2020).

The second objective of the study was to identify the mediating effect of personality traits on workplace cyber incivility and KSB. According to the theory of trait activation; individuals tend to hinder knowledge by playing dumb and justifying their such behaviours based on experienced situations. In aligning with the previous studies, if employees with extraversion personality traits are less likely to perceive workplace cyber incivility (Farrukh, et al., 2018). Yet, workplace cyber incivility negatively relates to conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness personality trait employees. Additionally, the

literature suggests that extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness personality traits employees are more likely to share information (Matzler, et al., 2008). Finally, the findings of the study show the negative indirect effect of personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness) between workplace cyber incivility and KSB (Sharifirad, 2016). Nevertheless, employees with traits such as positive social interactions, cooperative, hardworking, responsible, and imaginative employees are more likely to share knowledge though they perceived less-detrimental cyber behaviours (Jadin, et al., 2017; Tett, et al., 2013). We have concluded that personality traits partially mediate the said relationship.

VI. THEORETICAL AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implications of the study are twofold, stating with theoretical implications followed by implications for managers. Workplace cyber incivility is a fairly new detrimental behaviour that impedes knowledge sharing behaviour among others. This study light shed on organizational behaviour and information management literature by unveiling the relationship between cyber incivility, personality traits, KSB directly as well as indirectly. Consequently, we have made a contextual contribution to the IT sector addressing rarely studied predictors of KSB. In addition to the theoretical implications, there several managerial implications for practitioners and organizations.

Knowledge-sharing behaviour generates substantial positive consequences for organizations and employees such as competitive advantages, survival, innovations and creativity, and interpersonal relationships (Anand, et al., 2020). Therefore, it is of utmost importance to identify and address workplace cyber incivility; ignoring less detrimental behaviours may create a hostile work environment that demoralizes KSB. First, practitioners should ensure a civilized workplace; this can be done through proper orientation, training programs, and awareness sessions to use technology wisely. Second, create policy, procedures, code of conduct, and shared

norms to ensure civilized culture. Nevertheless, it is the organization's responsibility to continuously update its policies and communicate them among all the members of the organization. However, such initiations should start from the top management, when they use computer-mediated communication and knowledge management. Third, we have identified that though employees experienced workplace cyber incivility, their personality traits guide them for their behaviours. Hence, practitioners can recruit employees who are rich in personality characteristics and ethics. Last but not least ample employee engagement programs and knowledge management would help to encourage KSB among employees.

VII. LIMITATIONS, FUTURE RESEARCH, AND CONCLUSION

Several limitations of this study need to be addressed; we have measured KSB and workplace cyber incivility based on a measurement scale which is mental constructs. Therefore, there can be the possibility of occurring common method bias, we have addressed this using different scales to measure the constructs (Podsakoff, et al., 2003). Moreover, the reason for optimum discriminant validity could be the contextual differences; these measurements were developed in a western context. There are many research avenues for future researchers. First, we have conducted our study on cross-sectional nature which lacks in-depth exploration. Therefore, these constructs can be used to identify in-depth barriers for KSB among employees. Second, longitudinal studies may help to identify employee KSB. Last but not least it is better to identify the most significant personality trait which encourages KSB and identify moderating variables such as gender, generational differences, and educational level.

In conclusion, knowledge-sharing behaviour is critical for organizational survival and competitive advantage. However, negatives feelings and experiences may hinder employee knowledge-sharing behaviours. Therefore, this study attempted to identify the negative relationship between workplace cyber incivility and KSB via the mediating role of personality traits including Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, Openness to experience. The findings demonstrated that perceived workplace cyber incivility practices can negatively be impacted not only for employees but also for teams and organizations; if employees reluctant to share knowledge among others. Consequently, addressing and mitigating workplace cyber incivility behaviours could be an antidote for hindrances of knowledge. We believe that this study will stimulate the discernable views of researchers and practitioners to give more attention to deliberate less-severe detrimental cyber behaviours in organizations and KSB.

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