

Incivility as a barrier to knowledge sharing in the ICT workplace

27 March 2019, by David Bradley



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If people who work together don't have good interpersonal relationships, and more to the point, there is actual incivility between them, this can seriously impede the flow of knowledge within a company. A survey conducted among workers in the information technology and communications industry is analysed and discussed in the *International Journal of Information Systems and Change Management*. Incivility is generally characterized, not as physical violence, but as rude behaviour displaying disrespect and a lack of regard for others.

Muhammad Farrukh of Cyberjaya University College of Medical Sciences, He Ting of SEGi University, and Imran Ahmad Shahzad and Zhou Hua of Limkokwing University of Creative Technology in Malaysia, found a statistically significant correlation between incivility and knowledge sharing behaviour in ICT companies. There was also a demonstrable mediating effect of perceived organisational support. The team also points out that their analytical approach contributes to theory in this area of management by bonding two opposing poles of social exchange theory in

one framework.

"Social exchange theory underpins the basis for studying [workplace incivility](#) that is based on a 'tit for tat' pattern and is reciprocal in nature," the team writes. They add that "In a work context, these norms of reciprocity would respond favourable actions of management in a positive way, whereby negative and unfavourable treatment would produce negative reciprocity." In contrast, knowledge sharing is a positive phenomenon and the team points out that it is to the detriment of this that factors that do not lubricate knowledge sharing are ignored by management. It is vital to understand the barriers of knowledge sharing and to overcome them in order to nurture and enhance active [knowledge sharing](#) in the workplace, the team suggests.

"This study confirmed the importance and value of a supportive organisational climate for sharing [knowledge](#)," the team concludes.

More information: Muhammad Farrukh et al. Can incivility impede knowledge sharing behaviour, *International Journal of Information Systems and Change Management* (2019). [DOI: 10.1504/IJISCM.2018.098381](https://doi.org/10.1504/IJISCM.2018.098381)

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