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Fanning the Embers of Discrimination at Work: Does Reward Structure Fuel Incivility?

by

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requirements for the degree of

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Introduction

According to research published in recent years, minority groups still face career limitations and backlash because of their race (Toosi et al., 2019). The height of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2020 brought existing systemic racism to public consciousness and has influenced organizations to investigate their workplace cultures for discriminatory practices (Johnson, 2021). Organizations now more than ever before must navigate rising demands for equity or face the consequence of being labeled racist. Despite inclusion efforts, research has not yet informed whether reward structures are organizational systems that contribute to systemic racism in the workplace. In the current research, we will examine reward structure as an antecedent to intentions to perpetrate incivility that target people with minority races.

Reward structure can be used to incentivize employees towards accomplishing an organization's goals by offering opportunities to increase personal gain (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2010). Despite benefits to productivity, the motivational functions of reward structures could also, as a byproduct, foster latent behaviors that hinder optimal performance outcomes for both the organization and the employee. Workplaces also have inherent social power dynamics that contribute to workers' perceptions of acceptable behaviors within the organization given an individual's social status, and what behaviors may change their status for better or worse (Aiello et al., 2013). Sometimes, employees prefer the status quo and do not want changes to be made to current organizational systems where they are a stakeholder (Godefroid et al., 2022), because these changes could impact what behaviors are acceptable in the new context. In order to avoid change and protect the status quo, these employees may use incivility, defined as "low intensity deviant behavior" that includes the "violation of workplace norms for mutual respect", targeting

and harming others in order to maintain power and social dominance (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

Uncivil behaviors that target underrepresented groups in organizations could lead to losses in innovation and stifle the growth opportunities of organizations and individuals in the workforce. It is important to study outcomes associated with reward structures because commonly used organizational systems may be passively contributing to workplace mistreatment and discrimination. Since social status is frequently tied to gender and race beliefs (Ridgeway, 2001), it is possible that protective and uncivil behaviors could disproportionately target, and potentially deter long-term employment of employees from underrepresented gender and racial groups. Additionally, a single reward structure is unlikely to align with the individualistic, seniority, and hierarchically authoritative values of employees coming from racially diverse backgrounds (Mueller et al., 1999). This mismatch of values can result in low job satisfaction for those whose cultures do not align with the reward structure norms of an organization (Bretz & Judge, 1994). If reward structures better accommodate some groups than others, pay satisfaction and perceptions of distributive and interactional justice could also be disproportionately low for underrepresented racial groups from diverse cultures, leading to lower rates of retention in an organization (Kwon et al. 2008).

The existing literature indicates that seniority-based reward structures encourage improved employee retention and task performance (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2010), but the existing body of work does not touch on how reward structures can influence perpetrators' motivations for inflicting incivility in the workplace. More research on reward structures that result in the perpetration of incivility is necessary to encourage the introduction of healthy job reward systems that can support diverse employee retention and contribution. Systems that

support diverse employees can benefit organizations in business by fostering diverse perspectives and innovation, as well as in an ethical sense through inclusive action.

In the proposed study, we plan to explore the relationship between reward structures and incivility perpetration that results from motivations to protect the status quo. This study will build upon Social Dominance Theory (SDT), exploring the role of social dominance orientation (SDO) in explaining the relationship between reward structures and individuals' motivation to protect the status quo of their organization. This study will apply status quo bias (SQB) Theory to measure individuals' perceptions of organizational change through the inclusion of underrepresented racial groups. We will use the novel construct of motivation to protect the status quo (MPSQ) based on existing SQB principles that describe aversions to change that may precede incivility. This study will also build upon the status incongruity hypothesis (SIH) in an organizational context where seniority-rewarding workplaces may inadvertently facilitate discrimination that targets minority racial groups holding lower social status, going beyond the past research that has primarily applied this theory to explore perceptions of gender roles. In a broader sense, this research will investigate systemic inequity that may be a result of organizational systems (i.e. reward structure) that favor dominant groups, thus, maintaining the status quo and preventing organizations from developing diverse workers, perspectives, and opportunities for fair work.

Anticipated Contributions

The current study aims to contribute to the literature on reward structure as well as workplace incivility by applying SDT and SQB to these concepts. In our research we will highlight incivility as an outcome variable to reward structure. We will extend the nomological network of reward structure by going beyond typical, desirable outcome variables of interest

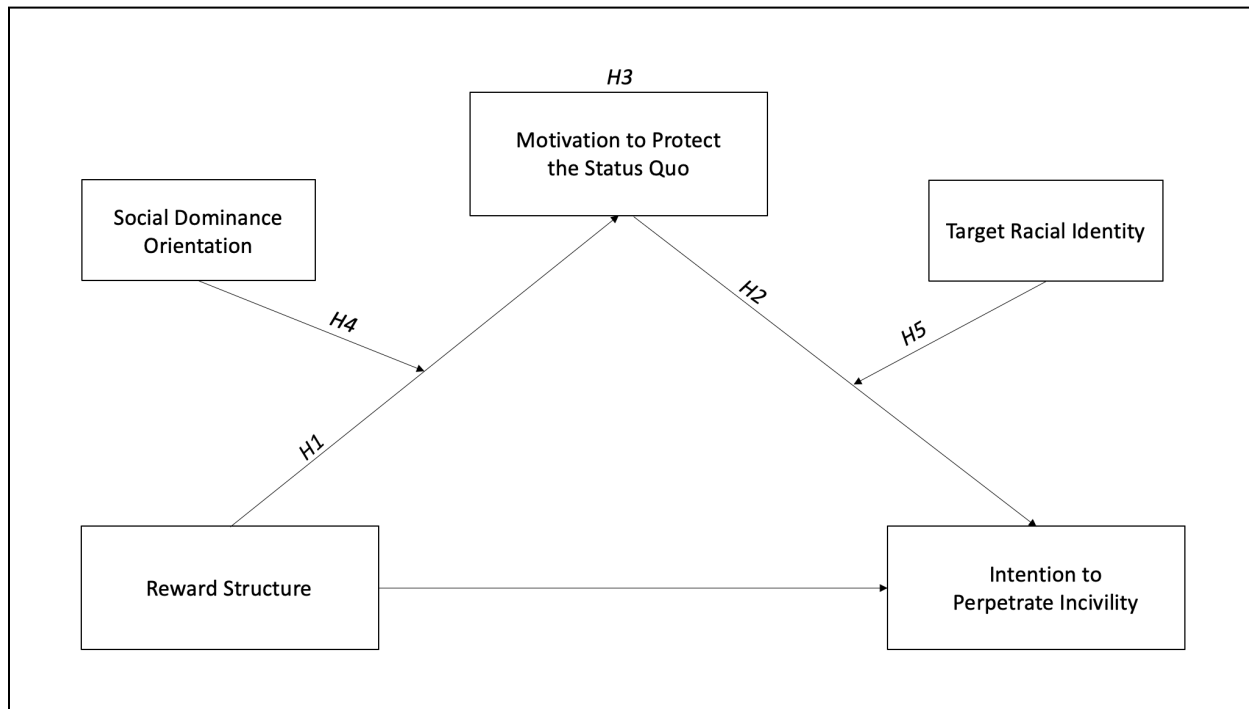
(i.e., employee motivation, retention and task performance; Bayo-Moriones et al., 2010; Kwon et al., 2008) and draw attention to potentially undesirable effects of reward structure (i.e., incivility and discrimination) to offer a more balanced picture of positive and negative outcomes of reward structure. On the positive side, reward structures may be intended to motivate worker performance and retention, however, SDO could explain negative outcomes of reward structure like motivations for enacting uncivil behaviors in exchange for reward-associated status. We predict that seniority-based reward structures will have greater rates of perpetrated incivility than performance-based structures due to seniority's preference for loyalty and longevity, since the "last man standing" is valued over an employee that is a top producer. Additionally, we anticipate that seniority-based reward structures' value of loyalty will align with MPSQ in that the core values of seniority-based structures require consistency in who is employed.

This development in our understanding of reward structure could also inform the literature on antecedents of incivility. Our findings have the possibility of determining whether reward structure is an organization-level factor that precedes, and continuously contributes to, the perpetration of incivility. Additionally, we will contribute to the literature on workplace incivility by examining under-studied perpetrator perspectives (Yang et al., In Press). By studying the perpetrator, our research can help guide future work toward preventive actions that can reduce workplace incivility at the individual-level, further adding to the literature on antecedents of incivility. The current research aims to reveal whether perpetrators tend to have high SQB and MPSQ and if the presence of racial diversity has a direct effect on the occurrence of perpetrators' uncivil behaviors.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

Figure 1

Theoretical Model of Associations Between Reward Structure, MPSQ, and Incivility



Reward Structures

Reward structures incentivize work by promoting company loyalty, high performance, and competition between employees (Kwon et al., 2008). Performance-based reward structures act as motivational devices for increased employee performance (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2010) and signal to employees that their contributions are important and recognized by organizational decision-makers (Fischer & Smith, 2004). Alternatively, seniority-based reward structures aim to retain employees by valuing wisdom and experience and offering members stable, ingroup status and opportunities for promotion in exchange for their loyalty (Rusbult et al., 1995). The differences between seniority- and performance-based structures may also create differences in the way that rewards and compensation are determined (e.g., seniority-based structures giving a private office to the most senior employee vs. performance-based structures giving a private

office to the top-selling employee). Seniority- and performance-based variation in reward allocation could lead to inequities in monetary rewards and status which may influence an employee's desire to stay with an organization for a long career. With this, seniority-based reward structures may be difficult for those with characteristics of low status since this reward structure greatly values having ingroup status.

Motivation to Protect the Status Quo

Past literature has shown that systemic change within organizations (e.g., technological innovations) may face resistance from employees and customers who prefer the status quo (Bao, 2009). Status quo bias (SQB) can be defined as one's preference for maintaining a current situation and avoiding changes to that situation (Godefroid et al., 2021). Existing research often describes organizational change as changes in systems and processes (e.g., adapting to new technology or software; Hsieh, 2015; Hoffman, 2020; Shirish & Batuekueno, 2021) with less attention put towards changes in the demographic makeup of employees. In today's political and ethical landscape, many organizations are trying to make workplaces more diverse and inclusive by hiring people from underrepresented backgrounds. In this context, SQB can describe an individual worker's preference to be surrounded by the same kinds of coworkers that they have traditionally been surrounded by, influencing their resistance to changes in demographics that will be inclusive to underrepresented racial groups. We predict that employees with high MPSQ will be more sensitive to organizational norm violations and will harbor negative attitudes towards racial "newcomers".

Social movements, such as the Black Lives Matter movement brought on by ongoing racial injustice, have motivated many organizations to take action to increase inclusivity and opportunity for previously underrepresented groups. Many organizations have chosen to make

changes to the diversity requirements of their Board of Directors and adopted anti-racism training to increase corporate social responsibility (Johnson, 2021). Given SQB and SIH, we predict that organizational changes aimed at increasing diversity and inclusion in the workplace and in high-power leadership roles could threaten the status quo for those ideologically aligned with traditional role congruity. As organizations diversify the workforce, changes could signal a threat to those who prefer the status quo, causing resistance to change and MPSQ. In this study, we will explore individuals' MPSQ in situations where changes to racial demographics threaten the status quo.

***H1:** Reward structure predicts motivation to protect the status quo, such that seniority-based reward structures will be associated with higher motivation to protect the status quo.*

Workplace Incivility

Incivility is defined as low-intensity actions that do not explicitly show the intent to cause harm but still violate social norms and negatively affect targeted employees (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, 2008). There is a growing body of literature that explores the motivations behind the perpetration of incivility hoping to predict incivility intentions and prevent this form of mistreatment before it occurs (Yang et al., In Press). The current research argues that the status quo is an environmental factor that perpetrators may be motivated to maintain. A perpetrator with high SQB may feel motivated to cause harm to others in order to defend their current situation from undesirable change. (e.g., high system threat leads to harsher ratings of agentic women pursuing leadership; Rudman et al., 2011). Thus, MPSQ may add to outcomes associated with workplace incivility. We predict that MPSQ will mediate the relationship between reward structure and the intention to perpetrate incivility and that seniority-based structures and MPSQ will be positively associated with incivility intentions. We

anticipate perpetrators' higher perceptions of organizational change will result in an increase in their intentions to take defensive action.

H2: Motivation to protect the status quo predicts the intention to perpetrate incivility, such that higher motivation to protect the status quo will be associated with higher rates of intentions to perpetrate incivility.

H3: Reward structure indirectly predicts the intention to perpetrate of incivility through motivation to protect the status quo, such that seniority-based reward structures will be associated with higher levels of motivation to protect the status quo and result in higher rates of intentions to perpetrate incivility, compared to performance-based reward structures.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Social dominance theory posits that all social settings contain a caste system consisting of different social groups, different levels of status between groups, and various abilities for individuals to move up or down in groups and status (Sidanius et al., 1992). When the culture of an organization maintains a caste system with many different status levels, it may be more likely that individual employees would be motivated to mistreat others to establish or improve their own organizational status. Additionally, certain reward structures could encourage individuals to desire to use dominating behaviors by using rewards as another means of gaining status over others. SDO traits can vary between individuals, where some prefer strong social identity and dominance rules (i.e., seniority-based) whereas others prefer to be assessed by more objective performance measures (i.e., performance-based) to define individual status. With this, we predict that seniority-based structures that reward employees based on company loyalty and longevity will have higher SDO than performance-based structures which rely on employees' productivity to determine status within the organization (Sidanius et al., 1992).

H4: Social dominance orientation moderates the relationship between reward structure and motivation to protect the status quo, such that for people with higher social dominance orientation, seniority-based reward structures will be more strongly related to higher motivation to protect the status quo than performance-based reward structures.

Minority Race Targets

In today's organizations, blatant racism has been replaced with modern forms of racial discrimination which utilize subtle behaviors, like microaggressions, allowing prejudiced attitudes and actions to continue even under the radar of political and legal measures taken against discrimination (Deitch et al., 2003). Unlike times when racism was more overtly displayed, racial minorities navigate modern racism in the form of "selective incivility" which alienates minority targets while allowing perpetrators to maintain an unbiased image (Cortina, 2008). Further, research by Cortina and colleagues (2011) found that the interaction between targets' race and gender predicted uncivil experiences, where women of color reported the worst treatment. Findings have shown that minority-status employees anticipate backlash for displaying behaviors that do not align with organizations' race and status norms (Toosi et al., 2019). On top of this, merely being employed in some industries can violate stereotypical roles of race resulting in minority-status employees being punished within the organizational culture (e.g., Black health care workers experiencing racism in higher education and industry; McGee, 2020).

SIH has largely been used to describe status in terms of gender roles, but has also been used in research regarding the status and role of different racial groups (Rudman et al., 2012; Hoyt & Burnette, 2013; Toosi et al., 2019). A study by Hoyt & Burnette (2013) investigated personal ideologies of gender roles either believing, a) that people can grow and adapt to new

roles or b) that people have fixed, unchanging traits and roles. Findings revealed that attitudes towards women in leadership roles depended on individuals' ideologies (i.e., believing people can grow and adapt vs. believing gender roles are fixed), where those who believed in fixed traits and roles did not feel that women were effective leaders due to traditional gender roles and values (e.g., women are communal and care for others, and men are agentic, confident, dominant, and self-reliant; Deaux & Kite, 1993; Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000; Williams & Best, 1990) that indicate leadership is status incongruent, or mismatched, to a woman's prescribed gender roles (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013). An intersectional study by Toosi et al. (2019) found that gender and race may indicate how individuals make negotiations and that the level of assertiveness they employ is shaped by their race, gender, and the level of anticipated backlash. Minority race and gender groups (i.e., White women, Asian men, and Asian women) were found to be less assertive and asked for less than White men before anticipating backlash. In this intersectional case, SIH describes how assertiveness is stereotypical and acceptable for White men compared to other genders and races that are punished for assertive behaviors that do not align with their stereotypical roles for assertiveness. Overall, findings from the SIH literature imply that minority groups still face backlash and career limitations due to gender and race role stereotypes (Toosi et al., 2019; Hoyt & Burnette, 2013; Cortina et al., 2011) and suggest that role-limiting beliefs could be related to negative attitudes towards those who violate the status quo or organizational norms regarding role beliefs.

When the status quo of an organization is being challenged, minority-status workers may be targeted more often than non-minority groups because of existing status differences between perpetrator and target within the social dominance hierarchy. Individuals who are on the receiving end of workplace incivility may be targeted because of low social status, with social

status being derived from minority identity characteristics that may be deemed foreign to the overarching organizational culture (Zurbrügg & Miner, 2016). Essentially, perpetrators of incivility may be more inclined to mistreat an “easy target” that is of a lower social status than they are in order to maintain their existing status and social dominance.

H5: Target race moderates the relationship between motivation to protect the status quo and the intention to perpetrate incivility, such that when targets with underrepresented races are present, higher levels of motivation to protect the status quo will be more strongly related to higher rates of intention to perpetrate incivility.

Methods

Participants and Procedures

To test our hypotheses, we plan to have a sample size of 400 participants. A sample size of 365 participants was used by Martinez (2012) in their study measuring ally- and targeting-behaviors in hostile or calm confrontations regarding prejudice against gay men. We will use this study as a basis for our sample size. Participants will be recruited by clustered convenience sampling from various sources, including online crowdsourcing forums (e.g., Reddit), recruiting in-person on university campuses, and posting fliers on community boards in-person and virtually.

Eligible participants will be 18 years of age or older, currently or previously employed, have internet access, and be able to complete a 20-minute survey independently in one sitting. In order to provide their informed consent, participants must be at least 18 years old. Additionally, participants must have some previous work experience in order to have familiarity with organizational structures and social interactions in a workplace setting. Internet access is required

to complete this study and individuals must be able to complete the study in one sitting without assistance to ensure that participant responses avoid external influence and interference.

Recruitment materials will inform participants of a one-time, online research opportunity with compensation of \$10 for approximately 20 minutes of their time. The flier will have a link to a short, online screening survey to check for eligibility and to ensure that they are able to watch videos online and focus on the study for the next 20 minutes. Participants who pass the eligibility survey will be immediately redirected to another online survey where they will disclose their informed consent, demographic information, and complete the study. Participants who do not have 20 minutes to spare or do not have the ability to watch videos at the time, but are otherwise eligible, will have the option to send a link to their personal email so that they can complete the study at a later time. Those who are not eligible for the study will be informed that they do not qualify and will not complete the study or be compensated.

The study will be comprised of two parts: a survey portion and an experiment portion. The survey portion will collect general demographic information from participants regarding their gender, race/ethnicity, and age. The following questions of the survey will utilize items from the SDO-7 (Ho et al., 2015) and adapted items from the “preference for tradition” subscale in the Resistance to Change Beliefs Scale (White et al., 2020) to measure participants' social dominance orientation and MPSQ, respectively. Reward structure (i.e., seniority-based or performance-based) and target racial identity (i.e., Black or White) will be manipulated as randomized experimental conditions and will be sufficient measures for each of these factors.

The experiment portion of the study will consist of two, first-person, *what would you do* videos that simulate workplace experiences of interacting with a coworker and selecting a behavior in response to that interaction (as per Martinez’s 2012 dissertation on prejudice against

gay men in the workplace). Participants completing the study will be randomly assigned to one of four conditions: the videos they are shown will either use (a) seniority-based reward structure to drive the plot with an actor who is a White man playing the coworker, (b) seniority-based reward structure to drive the plot with an actor who is a Black man playing the coworker, (c) performance-based reward structure to drive the plot with an actor who is a White man playing the coworker, or (d) performance-based reward structure to drive the plot with an actor who is a Black man playing the coworker. To isolate the effects of race, the actors in each condition will be men since this gender is socially dominant and is less likely to receive backlash for displaying agency in the video scenarios (Toosi et al., 2019). In addition, minority race actors will be Black as opposed to other races, since Black people have historically faced racism and segregation that is/was role-limiting (Johnson, 2021). These four conditions will also allow us to observe differences in behaviors between seniority- and performance-based conditions and how they relate to the intention to perpetrate incivility when Black or White targets are present.

Before watching each video, participants will read a vignette that will prime them for the reward structure condition they are assigned as well as the circumstances under which the plot of the video will begin. Participants will watch each video scenario and respond to a total of 8 items to rate the likelihood that they would respond with an uncivil behavior. The responses to the 8 items will be averaged to measure the intention to perpetrate incivility.

After completing the experiment portion of the study, participants will be informed that a full debriefing will be sent by email once data collection is complete. Before results are available, participants will be given the contact information of the principal investigator (PI) to ask questions regarding the study and their participation. In the final stage of the study, participants will be compensated by entering an email address where they would like to receive

their \$10 e-gift card. Research findings, background information, and the purpose of our study will be shared with participants once data collection and analysis is complete. We will offer follow-up support via email for participants who have questions following this debriefing.

Measures

Social Dominance Orientation

To evaluate participants' SDO we will use the Social Dominance Orientation-7 (SDO-7) Scale (Ho et al., 2015). This measure consists of 16 items representing four different dimensions of SDO: pro-trait dominance, con-trait dominance, pro-trait antiegalitarianism, and con-trait antiegalitarianism. We will use all four dimensions of the SDO-7 for the current research. Participants will indicate how much they favor or oppose each item on a 7-point Likert scale, from "1 = Strongly Oppose" to "7 = Strongly Favor". Example items include, "Some groups of people must be kept in their place" and "Group dominance is a poor principle." The SDO score is then computed by reverse-scoring con-trait items before calculating a composite scale mean. The SDO-7 has adequate construct validity and is reported to be a strong predictor of preference for dominance in general hierarchies. Across studies testing the reliability of the SDO-7, Cronbach's alpha has ranged from .89 to .95.

Motivation to Protect the Status Quo

To assess perpetrators' motivation to protect the status quo we will adapt existing items from the Resistance to Change-Beliefs (RC-B) Scale (White et al., 2020). The RC-B Scale consists of two subscales: a preference for tradition subscale and a preference for gradual change subscale. We will not be using the preference for gradual change subscale in this study since our construct of MPSQ does not intend to evaluate different kinds of change that can occur. The 5-items from the preference for tradition subscale will be adapted to MPSQ. For each item

respondents indicate how strongly they agree or disagree on a 7-point Likert scale, from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “7 = Strongly agree”. Examples of adapted items include the original item, “Approaches used by people in the past are generally the most effective” adapted to “I am motivated to maintain the existing approaches used at my workplace because they are generally the most effective”, and the original item, “The established way of doing things should be protected and preserved” to the adapted version, “I am motivated to protect and preserve the established way of doing things”. During testing and development of the original scale, reliability was moderately strong (alpha ranging from .69 to .77) and will be sufficient for our adapted measure.

Intention to Perpetrate Incivility

To measure the intention to perpetrate incivility, we will utilize eight uncivil behaviors from the Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (UWBQ; Martin & Hine, 2005). The UWBQ has 20 items and is comprised of four subscales (i.e., hostility, privacy invasion, exclusionary behavior, and gossiping). For this study, we plan to adapt two items from each subscale to represent anticipated uncivil behavior from the perpetrator’s perspective. Examples of adapted items include “Roll your eyes at them” as opposed to the original “Rolled their eyes at you” from the hostility subscale, and “Take items from their desk without prior permission” compared to the original “Took items from your desk without prior permission” from the privacy invasion subscale. Each of the two video scenarios will have four items that correspond to four different uncivil behaviors (one from each subscale) that participants will rate. All eight items will use a 7-point Likert scale (from 1=not very likely to 7 = very likely) to rate the likelihood that participants intend to respond to each video scenario with a given uncivil behavior. The responses to all eight items will be averaged to measure the participant’s intention to perpetrate

incivility in their randomized condition. The UWBIQ has shown strong reliability in multiple tests (Cronbach's alpha over .80 in all four subscales) and will be sufficient for our measure of the intention to perpetrate incivility.

Analytic Plan

Descriptive statistics will be collected for each variable (e.g., mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha) and scatterplots and histograms will be made to examine variance assumptions, assess normality, and identify potential outliers in the data. We will analyze research questions and hypotheses using R Studio and IBM SPSS version 29.

Primary analysis will include a moderated mediated regression that will examine the effect of reward structure on the intention to perpetrate incivility, mediated through MPSQ which is moderated by SDO in the first phase and target race in the second stage. To assess our hypotheses, we will use the Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013) in SPSS version 29 for all analysis. For H1 and H2, a simple linear regression will be performed to assess effects of reward structure on MPSQ (H1) and effects of MPSQ on intentions to perpetrate incivility (H2). H3, the indirect relationship between reward structure and intention to perpetrate incivility through MPSQ, will be computed by a mediation model in the Hayes PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). To compute H4 and H5, moderation models will be analyzed (Hayes, 2013; Hayes & Rockwood, 2017).

Discussion

The proposed study aims to find whether reward structures are associated with the intentions of incivility perpetration by accounting for perpetrators' SDO, their MPSQ, and the presence of Black targets. Data collection of participants' SDO, their MPSQ, and their chosen behaviors towards virtual targets of different racial identities will be used to determine if our

hypotheses are correct, where we predict that seniority-based reward structures will be associated with higher MPSQ and result in higher rates of intentions to perpetrate incivility than performance-based systems. Since seniority-based structures are common and beneficial in increasing employee loyalty and retention, it is important to understand the downsides to this structure and what additional contributing factors may lead to mistreatment. The findings of this research will add to the literature regarding reward structure outcomes, workplace incivility, and antecedents of incivility, and will provide insight into the organizational, individual, and social factors that may predict incivility intentions before harm is inflicted.

This research will introduce a new construct of MPSQ, and will adapt an existing measure for preference for tradition to describe the aversions to change in an organization. This study will also build upon SQB theory in that SQB has yet to be used to measure individuals' perceptions of organizational change in the form of changing racial demographics. Additionally, SDT will further illustrate personal traits that explain an individual's drive to gain or maintain status in an organization where changes are being made to the status quo.

Our study will contribute a new application for SIH where fixed-role ideology can cultivate negative attitudes toward organizational change and could encourage discriminatory culture that harms racial minorities. Like past research that has explored status incongruity and sexism towards women in leadership (Hoyt & Burnette, 2013), applying SIH to the context of race can provide a deeper understanding of other forms of role-limiting beliefs that can be a part of discrimination in the workplace.

Implications

This study has the potential to broaden our understanding of reward structures and antecedents to incivility through the novel concept of MPSQ. The current literature on

antecedents to incivility and the perpetrator perspective is limited. This study will provide unique insights into the perpetrator perspective by developing a video experiment where participants can virtually respond to organizational scenarios with uncivil behaviors without actually harming another person. By researching reward structure as a possible environmental antecedent to incivility, we aim to find the root cause of incivility intentions in order to later ways to prevent perpetration before it occurs. A practical implication of this research is that inequities in reward allocation could unintentionally result in workplace cultures that maintain the status quo by rewarding some groups over others, as opposed to saturating organizations with diverse workers, perspectives, and opportunities for fair work. Findings from this research could motivate organization leaders to model egalitarian attitudes and show their support for organizational change in order to reduce MPSQ. Research in this area will broadly contribute to workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by outlining factors that should be properly managed in order to avoid negative and/or discriminatory outcomes.

Limitations

Our study aims to measure individuals' SDO and MPSQ to better understand the relationship between reward structures and the perpetration of incivility, however, our recruitment methods may not be ideal for generalizable findings. By convenience sampling primarily from university campuses, we can expect to recruit a higher percentage of young people compared to the general population. Additionally, the culture at many universities embraces openness to new experiences and tends to sway more progressive, which could result in minimal findings of MPSQ and very few cases of racially motivated incivility compared to broader age and political demographics. By also recruiting through crowdsourcing platforms like Reddit, we hope to reach a broader demographic of people, but our sampling will still be limited

to those who are technologically savvy and have reliable access to the internet. Overall, our sampling methods may not be accessible to people who are lower socioeconomic status, elderly, and/or disabled due to technology constraints and inaccessibility of the online study design.

Another limiting factor of our study design will depend on the reliability between the Black and White race conditions in the video experiment. Each actor's performance of the scene, as well as their general level of attractiveness, could impact participants' perceptions and, furthermore, influence their chosen ratings of uncivil reactions. We plan to hire actors that have comparable perceived attractiveness and to coach them to perform the scenes in near-identical ways, but it is likely that these strategies will still not entirely isolate the actor's race from other factors that may influence participants' feelings towards the actors.

Lastly, there may be limitations in our lack of inclusion of gender into the tested hypotheses. While the current research is focused on the race of targets, a portion of our theory development discusses the gender of targets as a characteristic that impacts the perpetration of incivility. While gender and race are both characteristics that can impact individual status perceptions, we acknowledge that these two identity factors are unique and impacts of race on incivility perpetration may vary considerably from those of gender.

Future Directions

This study is focused on SDO and target race as variables that moderate the relationship between reward structure and incivility intentions. Different moderators could be studied in future research, including the perpetrator's and target's organizational rank or the target's gender or sexual orientation. Research that includes both target and perpetrator organizational ranks could further illustrate how organizational hierarchies and power distance impact the perpetration of incivility under certain reward structures. Additionally, follow-up research to this study could

take an intersectional approach by also accounting for target gender and sexual orientation in addition to race, to better understand workplace mistreatment and discrimination across other marginalized identities.

Since the main focus of the present study is centered around seniority-based structures, future directions could look more closely at the impacts of performance-based reward structures. While we predict that MPSQ may mediate the relationship between seniority-based reward structures and the intention to perpetrate incivility, we would expect to see the motivation for competition to mediate performance-based reward structures and intentions to perpetrate incivility. Further research in this regard could increase our understanding of phenomena that are associated with different organizational structures and subsequent incivility-related outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, our proposed study will examine the relationship between reward structure and the intention to perpetrate incivility and determine whether the MPSQ contributes to uncivil and/or racially discriminating behaviors in the workplace. If our predictions are correct, there will be a relationship between reward structure and intentions to perpetrate incivility, where seniority-based reward structures are associated with higher SDO, higher MPSQ, and higher rates of incivility intentions targeting racial minorities. The findings of our research will shed light on negative outcomes associated with commonly used organizational structures, further adding to the literature on reward structures, workplace motivation, and antecedents to incivility. Overall, this study will provide a basis for future research describing organizational structures' impact on incivility and discrimination and how these structures may interact with group dynamics and personal belief systems.

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