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Developing an integrated model of subtle prejudice and discrimination at the workplace

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Title: Developing an integrated model of subtle prejudice and discrimination at the workplace

Abstract: Despite the conceptual overlaps around theoretical, operational and methodological characteristics, the literature on three major fields of subtle prejudice and discrimination (SPD) – workplace incivility, ostracism, and microaggression, are scattered and pursued separately. However, given the subtlety, ambiguity, and covertness involved in the three constructs, this paper aims to integrate and reinterpret the directions of the research in the three areas. Additionally, the proposed integration may further refine and advance the research direction. Swanson's theoretical framework was applied to the three contributing fields of SPD to develop the proposed integrated model. The conceptual overlaps and variances found across three constructs and the theoretical framework applied suggests, to restructure the field of SPD across incivility with ostracism and microaggression as its two arms in the workplace context. Future research directions and practical implications of the integrated model is discussed at the end.

Keywords: Subtle prejudice and discrimination**,** Workplace incivility, Workplace Ostracism, Workplace microaggression, Swanson's theoretical framework

Word Count: 6879 (*Excluding tables and references*)

INTRODUCTION

In his response to Supreme Court verdict on decriminalization of gay sex, General Bipin Rawat, Army Chief, Indian Army replied, "Aap logon me chalega to chalne do, hamare yahan nahi chalega" (If its fine for you al, that's fine, but not here)[1]. Such statements from the chief of one of the coveted and largest army (second largest to be precise) in the world raises many questions. Assuming that in an army force as huge as 14 million (approximately) there are even few people belonging to the LGBT community, is this statement qualifies to be ostracism. Alternatively, should we characterize this statement to be one which invalidates the identity of LGBT community and hence qualify it as microinvalidation (a sub-type of microaggression)?, or, we characterize this utter disregard to the LGBT community as merely an uncivil behavior. This paper attempt to explore this overlaps and variances between such different forms of subtle prejudice and discrimination (SPD).

Workplace mistreatment has borrowed constructs heavily from social sciences. Constructs, as overt as workplace violence, aggression, abusiveness, and bully; and as covert as ostracism, incivility and microaggression have been researched extensively since last several decades. Researchers have now turned their focus more towards the covert forms of mistreatment in the 21st century as raised in the above anecdote and often labeled as "modern" forms of prejudice and discrimination (DeSouza, Ispas & Wesselmann 2017). Emphasis on covert workplace mistreatment does not imply that the issue is resolved completely with overt workplace mistreatment - blatant prejudice and discrimination. Instead, legal constraints, societal pressure, and fear of retaliation discourage people from expressing such intentions to prejudice and discrimination overtly. Hence, many scholars believe that it has transformed into highly disguised and invisible forms mostly outside the conscious awareness (Sue et al. 2007). Thus, being shunned, rejected, or excluded, i.e., being ostracized; being mistreated covertly because of one's race, religion, group, and so forth, i.e., being subjected to microaggression; and being disrespected, i.e., being subjected to uncivil behavior is becoming common across all social context including the workplace.

Newer expressions of subtle forms of expressing prejudice and discrimination such as *workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression* are no more merely an introductory concepts. Instead, these forms of mistreatment have quickly graduated to acquire spaces within the policy documents, training manuals (Osatuke et al. 2009) and mission statements of many organizations. However, it is still unusual to see various workplace mistreatments constructs within a single paper (Ferris, Chen & Lim 2017; Hershcovis 2011; Hershcovis & Reich 2013; Lim & Cortina 2005). So is the case with these three subtle forms of workplace prejudice and discrimination.

Interestingly, there exist reviews of literature on comparing the literature of workplace incivility and workplace ostracism (Ferris, Chen & Lim 2017) and workplace ostracism with workplace microaggression (DeSouza, Ispas & Wesselmann 2017). Though the mere presence of these literature reviews is not the justifiable reason to integrate all form of SPD literature, it hints towards the potential elements of both convergence and divergence that exist between the three concepts. For example, elements of invisibility, subtleness, intentionality (often intentional), and ambiguity

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[1] Chief General Bipin Rawat was speaking at his annual press conference held in New Delhi on 10 January 2019.

substantially exist around the three terms. Similarly, they all effects the physical and psychological well-being of the targeted individual at similar if not same levels. On the contrary, the elements of divergence exist around the operationalization of the concept. While incivility incorporates all forms of mistreatment to all types of target, ostracism and microaggression incorporates specific form of mistreatment and specific type of target respectively. Given the presence of these elements of convergence and divergence across the three terms, an attempt to integrate the three concept appears to be a worthy attempt. Therefore, this paper aims to provide a useful integrated model of workplace SPD. Particularly, it will further help to integrate and extend the literature in all three areas of workplace SPD discussed in this paper. Hence, it will be earnest to discern whether these three seemingly similar terms differed in conceptualization from each other (if any) and given their differences and similarity do the researches in these three areas headed in similar/different directions.

Thus, this paper intends to integrate the differences and areas of overlap between workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression in terms of its conceptualizations – theories used to explain these concepts, the operationalization of these concepts, and methods used to measure these concepts. This attempt to integrate the three pieces of literature may help in highlighting those areas which can be applied potentially to one another. Additionally, it can also help in advancing the literature of three major constructs of workplace SPD in general and the entire research on workplace mistreatment in particular. Lastly, this will also help in developing an integrated model for workplace SPD with the potential to advance the theoretical foundations of the field. Therefore, for separate recent reviews on incivility, one can refer Schilpzand, De Pater, & Erez (2016), workplace ostracism, one can refer Robinson, O'Reilly, and Wang (2013) and the research on workplace microaggression is too nascent to demand a separate literature review[2]. Hence, the present paper do not aim to extensively and exhaustively review the literature of the three constructs, instead to highlight the major ones.

The paper will present the method section and then briefly introduce the various concepts of workplace SPD, such as workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression. The similarities and differences in the conceptualizations of the two terms will follow next. Next, the paper discusses a historical account on the emergence of the two constructs and their comparative literature. Later, using Swanson's theory framework, an integrated model of workplace SPD will be presented. Lastly, paper delves upon the implications, and future research directions before making a concluding remark.

METHOD

Swanson' theoretical framework for applied disciplines was used to integrate and reinterpret the three constructs used in the literature of workplace SPD. Swanson (2007) discussed various theoretical frameworks including Dubin's eight-step theory-research cycle of the theory-building method (Dubin 1969), and Lynham's general method of theory-building research (Lynham 2002). However, he argued that these frameworks did not considered the boundaries of the disciplines, overlooked the smallest possible units of the disciplines, and failed to articulate the perspectives

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[2] There exists plethora of research within the ambit of microaggression, since its conceptualization in 2007. However, microaggressive research within workplace setting is too small to be accommodated for a literature review. Web of Science citations could only provide a total of 13 relevant studies in this field.

of researchers and practitioners. Hence, the framework as proposed by him is more promising in comparison to earlier proposed methods to integrate within a particular discipline. Hence, it was decided to use this framework to integrate the current study. The framework requires to identify two or more contributing theories of the discipline and then consider overlaps as core and useful theories, and variances as novel theories. Thus, the three contributing sub-disciplines identified were *workplace incivility, workplace ostracism,* and *workplace microaggression.* And in order to identify the overlaps and variances between these three literatures an EBSCO database was searched using the term 'workplace incivility', 'incivility', or 'rudeness'; 'workplace ostracism', or 'ostracism', or 'social exclusion'; and 'workplace microaggression', or 'microaggression'. The title and abstract of the output from the database was reviewed next to arrive at the final list of relevant papers. EBSCO database identified 115 papers for workplace incivility, 109 papers for workplace ostracism and 13 papers for workplace microaggression. Instead of diligently reviewing all papers, this paper conducts a critical review of the broad area of themes, methods, and theories used in these papers to ascertain the merits and demerits of each paper.

SUBTLE PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION AT WORKPLACE

Meertens and Pettigrew (1997) developed a separate scale for subtle prejudice and concluded that subtle prejudice is a different concept which can be both measured and distinguished from blatant prejudice. In their study they found how the well-educated respondents when compared to comparison group – more blatantly prejudiced, differed significantly; however, the differences narrowed, when measured for subtle prejudice. It is through this study they concluded that subtle prejudice is genuine prejudice. Similarly, the existence of subtle discrimination was succinctly discussed by Dipboye and Halverson (2004) in their chapter entitled 'Subtle (and not so subtle) discrimination in organizations. They argued that out of various sources of discrimination, psychologists have only studied about individual effects, while in an organization conflict occurs between individual level antecedents and factors at group, organization, and societal and economic levels. So, therefore, they suggested that the subtle form of discrimination is eviler than blatant discrimination. Thus, there exist studies which have already placed pieces of evidence suggesting the existence of SPD in organizations.

Researchers in the past have described these modern forms of prejudice and discrimination as subtle because of the covertness, ambiguity, and uniqueness that provides leverage to the offender in terms of being able to easily deny any wrongdoing or the intentionality of the wrongdoing (DeSouza, Ispas & Wesselmann 2017). Moreover, it is because of the same nature it becomes harder for the target at the receiving end of the wrongdoing to provide evidence in support of their prejudice and discrimination claim (DeSouza, Ispas & Wesselmann 2017). Three such forms of SPD are *incivility* – "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviors are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others" (Andersson & Pearson 1999, p.457); *ostracism* – "extent to which an individual perceives that he or she is ignored or excluded by others" (Williams 2001, in Ferris et al., 2008, p.1348); and *microaggression* – "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults to the target person or group" (Sue, et al. 2007, p.271).

Workplace Incivility: Andersson & Pearson (1999) observed the existence of incivility in a larger society and extended the notion of incivility in a workplace setting. By incivility, he was referring to the newer and more modern forms of prejudice and discrimination practices, such as negative gestures, discourteous remarks, or inconsiderate acts (Neuman & Baron 1997). Incivility as an interactive event involves the targets, instigators, observers, and the contexts that either contribute or affect the uncivil behavior – the source of incivility (Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez 2016). Besides, incivility also varies in terms of types (Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez 2016);

- ***Experienced Incivility*** **–** Experiencing uncivil workplace conduct.
- ***Witnessed Incivility*** – Witnessing uncivil workplace conduct.
- ***Instigated Incivility*** – Engaging in uncivil workplace conduct (Perpetrators).

Important features of workplace incivility involve ambiguous intent to harm, difficulty in discerning the intentionality, and perpetrators can be anyone from supervisors, coworkers to subordinates (Schilpzand, De Pater & Erez 2016). Incivility is generally expressed towards gender (Lim & Lee 2011; Cortina et al. 2013), racial minority (Cortina et al., 2013), disagreeable and neurotic (Milam, Spitzmueller & Penney 2009), and younger generations (Lim & Lee 2011). Additionally, workplace incivility is also found to be affecting the affective, cognitive, attitudinal and behavioral outcomes of the target. To illustrate; affective outcomes (for targets) – for e.g., stress (Cortina et al. 2013), and depression (Lim & Lee 2011), cognitive outcomes (for targets) – for e.g., reduced task-related memory recall (Porath & Erez 2007), and lower levels of targets' perceived fairness (Lim & Lee 2011), attitudinal outcomes (for targets) – lower levels of commitment (Lim & Teo 2009), motivation (Sakurai & Jex 2012) and satisfaction (Bunk & Magley 2013) with the organization, and behavioural outcomes (for targets) - decreased levels of career salience (Lim & Teo 2009), decreased levels of work engagement (Chen et al. 2013), heightened levels of absenteeism (Sliter, Sliter & Jex 2012), increased levels of withdrawal behaviour (Cortina et al. 2013), increased turnover intentions (Griffin 2010), and actual organizational exit (Porath & Pearson 2012).

Workplace Ostracism: Literature on ostracism is scattered across various terms such as ostracism (Gruter & Masters 1986; Williams 2001; Ferris et al. 2008), linguistic ostracism (Dotan-Eliaz, Sommer & Rubin 2009), social exclusion (Blackhart et al. 2009), and organizational shunning (Anderson 2009). These terms may have been defined using separate phrases but meant similar experiences whereby a person is excluded by others (Robinson, O'Reilly & Wang 2013). Workplace ostracism may not contain any intentional motive to harm, is determined by the social norms of the context, and is defined by acts of positive omission and not by negative commission (Robinson, O'Reilly & Wang 2013). This suggests that even workplace ostracism involves ambiguity, it is subtle and covert and characterized by the lesser intensity as in workplace incivility.

Till date, several perspectives have been used to explain workplace ostracism. Ferris, Chen, and Lim (2017) described workplace ostracism as a non-interactive form of workplace incivility. From the conservation of resources perspective, Leung et al. (2011) argued that loss of valuable resources occurred because of being ostracized and an employee will want to conserve these ties which otherwise has provided her/him with necessary job resources in the past. This argument also states some of the positive aspects of workplace ostracism. As in the above case, if an individual is motivated enough to remain with the group, he may try harder and thereby built a socially

cohesive tie to gain back their membership in a group. Similarly, if the need to belong is high in an individual towards a certain group, the same logic applies (Jamieson, Harkins & Williams 2010). This is in contrast to many studies which focussed on the negative impact of workplace ostracism on employees (Ferris et al. 2008; Leung et al. 2011; Wu et al. 2012; Liu et al. 2013). While at the other end, using social dilemma perspective, Balliet and Ferris (2013) explained that the negative and positive impact of ostracism depends upon the temporal orientation of the target when considering the impact of ostracism on prosocial behavior.

Thus, the impact of workplace ostracism had been studied using three different paths. Firstly, it can have a detrimental effect on both the physical and psychological well-being of the individual ostracized as highlighted in many psychological works of literature. Secondly, it can also have positive effects in terms of enhanced effort by the ostracized to conserve past ties which was of some value in the past and which presently appears to be in danger. Finally, it may also depend upon the context in which the act of ostracism was enacted.

Workplace Microaggression: Microaggression may seem to be an appreciation but contain a "metacommunication" or hidden insult to the target group. These messages may be sent verbally, nonverbally or environmentally. Sue et al. (2007) provide three categories of microaggressions:
- *Microinsult* – "Behavioural/verbal remarks or comments that convey rudeness, insensitivity, and demean a person's heritage or identity" (Sue et al. 2007, p.73),
- *Microassault* – "explicit racial derogations that are verbal (i.e., racial epithets), nonverbal (behavioral discrimination), or environmental (offensive visual displays) attacks meant to hurt the person of color. It is generally deliberate and conscious," (Sue et al. 2007, p.73) and
- *Microinvalidation* – "Verbal comments or behaviors that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person" (Sue et al. 2007, p.73).

Micro-aggression is directed toward any group of our society that is considered marginalized. The different targeted group is expected to face different types of microaggressions. They can be marginalized based on gender, sexual orientation, class, or disability (Sue & Capodilupo 2008). Moreover, given the definition, microaggression seems inconsequential, studies have shown time and again that repeated exposure to microaggressive events does causes stress and distress among the targets.

Sue et al. (2007), Keller and Galgay (2010), Capodilupo et al. (2010), and Nadal (2010, 2011, 2013) emphasized the presence of a racial, disability, gender, multiracial and sexual orientation microaggression respectively. Researches in the area are suggestive of creating a hostile climate for marginalized group resulting in stress and distress (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero 2008), and feeling of isolation and loneliness (Alexander & Moore 2008), and so forth. Researches in the area of microaggressions also reveal that though it seems it is trivial, it is a key for several consequences for marginalized groups in our society. For example: it reduces work productivity and problem solving abilities (Dovidio 2001; Salvatore & Shelton 2007), affects the mental health of targets (Sue, Capodilupo & Holder 2008), create a hostile and invalidating climate (Solórzano, Ceja & Yosso 2000), are responsible for creating inequities in education, employment and health care (Purdie-Vaughns et al. 2008; Sue 2010), propagate stereotype threat (Steele, Spencer & Aronson 2002), affects the physical health of the targets (Clark et al. 1999), affect the career paths of

microaggression victims (Solorzano 1998), and signal devaluation of social group identities (Purdie-Vaughns et al. 2008). Sue (2010a, 2010b) further argued that perpetrators are often unaware that a microaggressive event or incident or communication has occurred thus, creating a psychological dilemma in both the perpetrator and recipient of microaggression.

CONTRASTING THE CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF THE THREE CONSTRUCTS

As stated earlier, there exist certain overlaps between these concepts, and yet they are different in some other. However, workplace incivility seems to have the upper hand over the other two constructs in terms of its general scope. Workplace incivility contains all forms of mistreatment directed towards all kinds of the target (irrespective of its group membership defined by race gender, sexual orientation, and so forth.). While, Ferris, Chen, and Lim (2017) considered workplace ostracism as the non-interactive form of workplace incivility. Similarly, by definition workplace microaggression is all forms of mistreatment but directed towards members of specific groups. Thus, workplace incivility seems to contain the scope of the two constructs in elements and hence worth considering it as a first-order construct with workplace ostracism and workplace microaggression as its two arms. Hence, the conceptual overlaps and variances respectively are compared and contrasted between workplace incivility and the other two constructs.

Conceptual Overlaps (Workplace Incivility and Workplace Ostracism): In addition to being subtle and covert both workplace incivility and workplace ostracism have many things in common (Ferris, Chen & Lim 2017). Firstly, both the constructs are ambiguous in terms of its inability to determine the intentionality of the workplace SPD that occurs in both the constructs. Secondly, both the constructs are very commonly practiced within organizational settings (Andersson & Pearson 1999; O'Reilly et al. 2014). Thirdly, there exists an act of being disrespectful, discourteous, and disregard to the target. For example, in uncivil behavior, the perpetrator of the workplace incivility as per the definition of the term violates the norms of mutual respect, while in the act of ostracism perpetrator ignores, or exclude the target from such social interactions which are socially inappropriate. Fourthly, it is hard to impossible for the targets of both incivility and ostracism to prove that an act of uncivil or ostracized behavior has occurred (Andersson & Pearson 1999; Ferris et al. 2008). Lastly, both of the constructs have damaging physical and psychological consequences.

Both workplace incivility and workplace ostracism are studied empirically either through a survey using quantitative measures or manipulating them in a scenario-based experimental condition. Cortina et al. (2001) developed one of the most widely used scales to measure workplace incivility and labeled it as 'Workplace Incivility Scale' (WIS). It was a seven-items scale later adapted to 12-items (Cortina et al. 2013), and 20-items (Cortina et al. 2013). Similarly, the 10-items scale developed widely used to measure workplace ostracism is labeled as 'Workplace Ostracism Scale' (WOS) (Ferris et al. 2008). This scale has also been revised based on the context in which it was supposed to be measured by the concerned author/s. Experiments have also been conducted to assess experienced or witnessed incivility (e.g., Francis et al. 2015; Giumetti et al. 2013; Porath & Erez 2007, 2009; Reich & Hershcovis 2015) and even ostracism (e.g., Balliet & Ferris 2013; Derfler-Rozin, Pillutla & Thau 2010). Thus, even methodological convergence exist in the literature of both workplace incivility and ostracism.

The origin of workplace incivility and ostracism in management literature happened around the same time. It was the seminal paper by Andersson and Pearson in 1999, which propagated the term workplace incivility; and the seminal paper by Williams in 2001 (plus the book chapter published in 1997), which propagated the use of workplace ostracism in management research. Similarly, the research in both areas concentrated on the negative impact on the physical and psychological health of the target.

Conceptual Variances (Workplace Incivility Vs. Workplace Ostracism): Workplace incivility has a broader approach to SPD and hence includes all forms of mistreatment, while workplace ostracism includes only the non-interactive forms of mistreatment. Thus, workplace ostracism specifically only focusses on mistreatments that include either ignoring or excluding the targets by the perpetrators when it is socially inappropriate. It does not include any positive or negative interactions, while workplace incivility most often involves negative interactions. Robinson et al. (2013) maintained that ostracisms involved omission of social contact, while incivility involves maintaining the same but in negative terms.

There are close to 115 relevant papers available for workplace incivility since 1999 to 2018 and 109 relevant papers available for workplace ostracism from 2003 to 2018. Though literature in both areas targeted the negative impact of the two terms, the literature in the area of workplace ostracism has also provided evidence of a few positive impacts. For example, as per need to belong perspective, which is often invoked to explain ostracism, strong need to belong may make them work harder to get included in the same group, they were excluded. Even further, there also exists evidence that the positive or negative impact of workplace ostracism also depends upon the temporal orientation of the targets of ostracism. Thus, incivility literature has so far ignored the study of the positive impact of incivility at the workplace. Similarly, the incivility literature has also ignored the relationship between prosocial behavior and incivility which is largely covered under ostracism literature (albeit with the contrasting results) (Ferris et al. 2017). Incivility literature, on the other hand, has evidence supporting incivility spiral – small acts of incivility getting spiraled up to more explicit and violent forms of mistreatment (Andersson & Pearson 1999), while there is still no concept of ostracism spiral investigated so far (Ferris et al. 2017). Third party reactions to incivility is another popular research which still is overlooked within ostracism research (Ferris et al. 2017).

Conceptual Overlaps (Workplace Incivility and Workplace Microaggression): Firstly, the definition of both the term given by the seminal authors respectively discusses the intentionality of their respective terms and maintains an ambiguity in this regard. While incivility definition states the *'ambiguous intentions to harm,'* microaggression definition suggests that the perpetrator can be involved in microaggression either *'intentionally or unintentionally.'* Secondly, few of the characteristics of uncivil behavior are being rude, discourteous, and lack of regards towards the target. While, microaggressive messages are indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative slights and insults. Thirdly, if one looks at uncivil and microaggressive conduct, both involve meta-communication – hidden insults, between an instigator and a target. This also implies uncivil or microaggressive conduct is very much covert and invisible if not to the targets than at least to the observers. Fourthly, even if targets identify either of the covert negativity, it will be very difficult for her/him to explain the same to others either out of hesitation or simply the lack of proofs available at his discourse. Fifthly, both the event will have an instigator - who instigates

the uncivil or microaggressive conduct, target, observer and a context as a source. Sixthly, both incivility and microaggression can have damaging physical and psychological consequences. Lastly, there are similarities in terms of the demography of targets that are targeted by the instigator to raise uncivil or microaggressive conduct. These include race, gender, age, sexual orientation, and so forth.

At a theoretical and methodological level, firstly, both incivility and microaggression in a workplace setting have been extensively studied for demographic characteristics (such as gender, racial minority, and sexual orientation). Exceptions being the use of personal dynamics of the target in terms of self-efficacy (Rhee, Hur & Kim 2017), emotional intelligence (Itzkovich & Dolev 2017); third-party involvement (Henkel et al. 2017); reaction to incivility (Nicholson & Griffin 2014; Welbourne & Sariol 2017; Bedi & Schat 2017) in incivility research. While workplace microaggression research apart from demographic characteristics focused on exploring process (language) of microaggression (Shoshana 2016), and color-blind attitudes (Offermann et al. 2014). Secondly, the consequences of both workplace incivility and workplace microaggression seem to have the same effect in the long run when the target is subjected to any one of this act repetitively. Literature has also focused majorly around physical and psychological consequences with more or less same results. Lastly, both incivility and microaggression literature has acknowledged the importance of understanding cross-cultural differences (Incivility - Tsuno et al. 2017 and Microaggression – Sue et al. 2007).

Conceptual Variances (Workplace Incivility Vs. Workplace Microaggression): Firstly, workplace incivility appears to be broader in terms of scope in comparison to workplace microaggression. For example, uncivil conduct may not only remain confine to the demography of the targets, instead can base itself to as simple as the dressing sense of the target. Secondly, it is the broader scope of incivility that makes it more invisible in comparison to microaggression. As wider the access to varying ways of instigating uncivil conduct towards others more will be the difficulty in identifying the event of incivility. Lastly, instead of creating a typology based on target (experienced incivility), instigator (instigating incivility), and observer (witnessed incivility) as in the case of incivility, the typology of microaggression is based on the intensity of the effect of microaggression on target. With microinsult falling in between on the intensity scale, the intensity of the effect is minimal at microinvalidation level and maximum at microassault level (Sue et al. 2007).

At a theoretical and methodological level, firstly, the concept of workplace incivility is close to two decades old in comparison to 8 years of workplace microaggression, when Sue (2010b) for the first time brought the notion of microaggression in the workplace setting. Thus, while there are close to 115 relevant papers available on workplace incivility from 1999 to 2017, one could only find 13 relevant papers on workplace microaggression from 2010 to 2017. Secondly, there might be dearth in the literature of microaggression in workplace settings, but microaggression in the field of psychology, sociology and social work is studied extensively. Most often the major context in which microaggression appears to have been extensively researched include educational settings with the student as a sample. While incivility is extensively studied in workplace settings and has primarily dealt with employees as a sample. Thirdly, methodologies used in two domains differ predominantly in terms of qualitative and quantitative techniques used. Researches in the area of incivility were facilitated by the development of numerous quantitative measures including

Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS) (Cortina et al. 2001); Uncivil Workplace Behavior Questionnaire (Martin & Hine 2005); and many more. While the development of microaggression scale happened recently - a 13-item scale by Graebner et al (2009). Most often the research on microaggression has been exploratory, and quantitative orientation in microaggression research is a recent development (Offerman et al. 2014 & Basford, Offerman & Behrend 2014).

Table 1: Subtle prejudice and discrimination: Summary of conceptual overlaps and variances

Overlaps and Variances	Workplace Ostracism	Workplace Incivility	Workplace Microaggression
Separate Conceptual Overlaps and Variances			
Overlaps	Similar physical and psychological health impact		
	Ambiguity, Intentionality, and Scope (in terms of who gets mistreated)		-
	-	Ambiguity, Intentionality, and Scope (in terms of how is one getting mistreated)	
Differences	Exclusion as means of mistreatment	All forms of mistreatment with all sorts of targets	Group-based mistreatment of the target
Common Conceptual Overlaps and Variances			
Overlaps	Methodological similarity in kind of investigations undertaken		
Differences	Different theoretical perspectives used to undertake studies		

INTEGRATED MODEL OF WORKPLACE SUBTLE PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION: APPLICATION OF SWANSON'S THEORY FRAMEWORK

Swanson's theoretical framework for applied disciplines (Swanson 2007) provides for a model that is used in the current study to integrate the three disciplines of workplace SPD within the workplace. Swanson's framework ask for the identification of the boundary of the theory and find out a minimum of three contributing theories of the discipline. Once the contributing theories get identified, it helps in identifying the overlaps and the distinguished area of the said theory. The area of overlaps between the contributing theories are known as useful theories, and the common area of overlap combines to form the core theory of the overall discipline. Lastly, the areas of non-overlaps are the novel theories of the discipline. Figure 1 depicts the model diagrammatically.
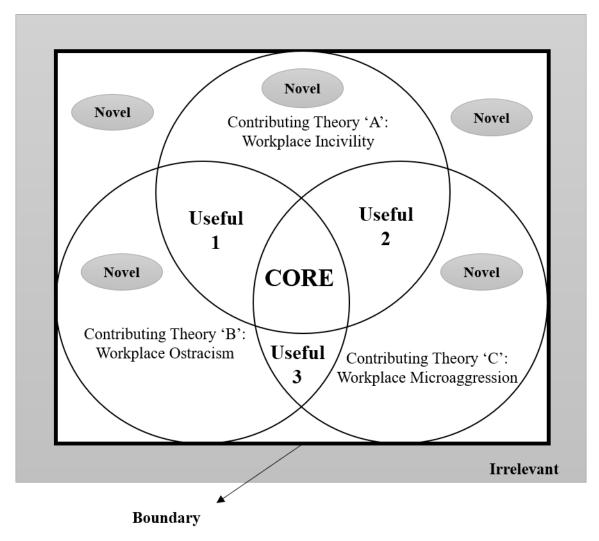
Figure 1: Theory Framework for Subtle Prejudice and Discrimination using Swanson's Model of Theory Framework for Applied Disciplines

The boundary of the theory in above Discipline: Unlike traditional overt forms of prejudice and discrimination, such as workplace bullying, undermining employees, and abusive supervision; employee today faces modern or more subtle and covert forms of prejudice and discrimination. Thus, all overt forms of prejudice and discrimination become irrelevant to the current theoretical framework. Also, it is the subtlety and covertness in prejudice and discrimination that becomes the boundary condition.

Contributing theories of the above discipline: Three theoretical lenses used to explain this subtlety in workplace aggression includes, workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression.

Core Theory in the above discipline: The interaction and integration of the above three contributing theories will mean developing a new theory which talks about all forms of workplace SPD covering both – who gets targeted and how the targets are mistreated. It means that the overlaps identified as common across all three contributing disciplines will form the core of

workplace SPD. There are three such major overlaps that can develop this core. First, the effects of all three disciplines on target were found to be similar. For example, as stated before all three forms of workplace SPD identified in this paper has similar detrimental effect on physiological and psychological health of the target. Secondly, the targets of all three forms of SPD were majorly similar in nature. For example, people with certain colour, race, gender, age, disability, class, religion, and so forth. Thirdly, all forms of workplace SPD were found to be covert, invisible, and ambiguous in terms of fixing the intentionality. Thus, the core theory can be built around these three similarities and that these similarities can also be visualized as major trigger to combine these three disciplines into one common thread. Thus, the core theory of workplace SPD can be stated *"as covert and subtle act of prejudice and discrimination with ambiguous intent that are targeted to all sort of people at workplace and can have a detrimental effect on the physical and/or psychological health of targeted individual."*

Useful theory in the above component:
1) The basic difference between workplace incivility and ostracism is specifically (mis)treatment the employees receive in both conditions. Thus, at the intersection of workplace incivility and ostracism lies the interaction and non-interaction between target and perpetrator (Ferris, Chen & Lim 2017). While in the case of incivility, the interaction exists (though negatively), in case of ostracism, the target is excluded or omitted from engagement in the important organizational activity. Thus, the similarity remains in that anyone or everyone can be subjected to both incivility and ostracism in an organization.
2) The basic difference between workplace incivility and microaggression is about who is specifically being subjected to SPD. This implies, that while anybody could be a target of incivility, microaggression implies SPD towards members of particular community, race or gender. Thus, the similarity between the two is the (mis)treatment that target receives, which is discourteousness, rudeness, and utter disregard.
3) The basic difference between workplace ostracism and microaggression is that the former is an act of omission (ignoring an individual), and later is an act of commission (intended to an out-group member) (DeSouza, Ispass & Wesselmann 2017).

It is this usefulness of the three theories defined by their interaction with each other that indicates the wider scope of incivility research in comparison to workplace ostracism and workplace microaggression. Incivility can be regarded as broader as it appears to cover all types of mistreatment to all form of targets. While workplace ostracism only covers a particular type of mistreatment – exclusion from particular group, information sharing, and so forth, and workplace microaggression only covers a particular form of targets – individual with specific colour, gender, age, race, religion, and so forth. Hence, it is based on the overlaps identified in core and useful theory of the Swanson's model, that a new integrated model of workplace SPD can be formulated with workplace incivility at its core having workplace ostracism and workplace microaggression as its two wider arms.

Novel Theory in the above discipline: Novel aspect of the model as depicted in Figure 1 can be found at two levels – exclusively found in one of the contributing theory but not in other two, and those aspects of workplace SPD which is currently excluded from all of the contributing discipline. As discussed above exclusion as a distinct form of mistreatment is novel aspect of workplace ostracism. Similarly, group-based mistreatment of any form is a novel aspect of workplace

microaggression while a novelty in workplace incivility is that it considers both exclusion as mistreatment and group-based all forms of mistreatment within its ambit. There have been very few researchers who carried a group-based investigation in the area of workplace ostracism (Ferris et al. 2017). It is rational to believe that if some form of uncivil behavior can be directed to a target based on groups she/he belongs to, then the same target may also get targeted for an ostracized form of uncivil behavior. It will be special consideration if a particular form of uncivil behavior (being ostracized) will have a stronger/lesser effect on certain group-based targets.
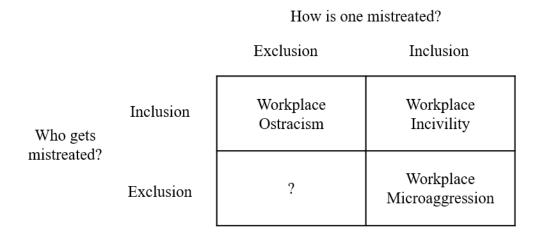

Figure 2: What could be novel in the above discipline?

When placed in two dimensions of who gets mistreated (inclusion – anyone/everyone could be subjected to mistreatment or exclusion – out-group member gets mistreated) and how is one mistreated (exclusion – non-interactive or inclusion - interactive but in negative manner), the dimension where member of specific group is subjected to exclusion from the group can be one novel area to pursue (Refer Figure 3). Ostracism towards specific community, race or gender can be one novel approach, for example, workplace ostracism towards the LGBT community (DeSouza, Ispass & Wesselmann 2017).

DISCUSSION

The paper helps in identifying what are the contributing, core, useful, and novel areas within workplace SPD discipline using the Swanson's theoretical framework. The three contributing theories of the area were identified as workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression. Two of the useful unanimous overlaps among the contributing areas were identified as ambiguity in intentionality and lesser intentionality involved in the three forms of mistreatments. More specifically, the most useful overlap was that all three identified areas of workplace SPD have more or less similar physical, psysiological and psychological ill-effects on their respective targets. Other than these overlaps, there exists a specific type of mistreatment which is non-interactive and exclusionary between incivility and ostracism. Similarly, the overlap identified between incivility and microaggression involved group-based mistreatments in both non-interactive and interactive form. It is these overlap which leads this paper to develop a model that indicates for the intersection of the three forms of mistreatments with incivility as the main

discipline and ostracism and microaggression as its two arms. Incivility was chosen as the main contributing theory which can incorporate both ostracism and microaggression because it is broader in terms of its scope. Incivility covers all form of mistreatment that microaggression also covers but ostracism do not and it also covers all type of targets that ostracism covers but microaggression do not.

The proposed framework also guides future researchers in each area to learn from each other. Specifically, those aspects of each theory which is novel to other two. For example, researchers have categorized incivility in three types – experienced, witnessed, and instigated, based on who is involved in what way in an act of incivility. This categorization helps incivility researchers to differentiate the effect of incivility on each of these categories of individual involved in an act of incivility. The same categorization can also be applied to an act of ostracism (experienced, witnessed, or instigated ostracism) and microaggression (experienced, witnessed, or instigated microaggression). Another major learning from the field of incivility that can be incorporated within the domain of workplace ostracism and workplace microaggression is its spiralling (Andersson & Pearson 1999) and spill-over effect (Liu et al. 2013) effect. Lastly, researchers have also studied the effect of workplace incivility on non-work outcomes (Lim & Lee 2011) which can have serious implications over the much sought after concept in the area of human resource management – work-family balance. Similarly there are novel areas within the research work of workplace ostracism. For example, workplace ostracism can sometimes even trigger positive effect in terms of acceptance of group norms and enhanced performance (Balliet & Ferris 2013). It may be interesting to find if there are few positive effects with respect to workplace incivility and workplace microaggression. As far as learning from microaggression is concerned, one can again consider the categorization of microaggression – microinvalidation, microassault, and microinsult. These categorizations are primarily identified based on intensity of microaggression faced by the target with microinvalidation as less intense and microassault as more intense of all three (Sue et al. 2007). Researchers in the area of workplace incivility and workplace ostracism can also attempt to find different levels of effect that these two areas can have on their respective targets. Thus, the learnings adopted from one area of research can be applied to other two areas of research and can be formulated as future research directions

Thus, both the overlaps as identified within the core and useful theory section and the differences as identified in the novel theory section in the model develops two important propositions. Firstly, there lies a scope to merge the field of workplace SPD around workplace incivility with workplace ostracism and workplace microaggression as its further division. Secondly, that each of these work areas within SPD has something to learn and apply both theoretically and practically. However, this could be plausible if the three areas of work are not conducted in isolation rather streamlined adequately for a holistic vision.

Practical Implications: Managers can no more ignore the covert clues signifying incivility, ostracism, and microaggression and therefore will have to sensitize themselves about their existence and the harming effects. Firstly, given that more or less the paths of these three different constructs are the same, managers may have to work out their policies related to inclusiveness together. That is, rather than having separate policies for incivility, ostracism, and microaggression which may further confuse the training module, integrating all forms of behavior that gets covered under one umbrella of SPD will suffice. It is important to understand that currently the diversity

literature is expanding and managers have a hard time incorporating all of them. Hence, it is wise to advise that rather than being bombarded several terms from various disciplines, it will be better if they compile them together under one roof. As more or less the nature and consequences of workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggressions are similar. Incivility being broader, when managers target incivility, ostracized and the microaggressive event might get covered in itself.

Future Research Directions: Apart from incorporating all the novel aspects presented in the model in their respective research, future researchers can attempt to provide further evidence to substantiate the working of the model. Researchers can thus look to incorporate all three forms of workplace SPD and examine it ill-effect in one single research. For example, experimenting with three different target group and one control group undergoing three types of SPD respectively and ascertaining its effect on physical, physiological and psychological ill-effects. It also needs to be examined that in order to combine all three forms of workplace SPD does conceptualization of incivility, ostracism, and microaggression needs to be differentiated with the conceptualization of workplace incivility, workplace ostracism, and workplace microaggression to better fit with the model.

Conclusion: This paper argues for the integration of the three separate but popular concepts of workplace SPD, unlike other researchers from the past who tend to establish that they are conceptually apart from each other (Ferris et al. 2017; DeSouza et al. 2017). It is expected that integrating these three terms in one single model may provide a definite direction in the area of workplace SPD while ensuring that their individual path is not disturbed. Most importantly, it will help researchers from the three domain to communicate, and frequently learn from each other and advance their respective field.

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