

**RESEARCH PAPER**

**From Incivility to Disengagement: Negative Rumination as a Mediating Mechanism**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study examined the indirect relation of workplace incivility with work engagement mediated by negative rumination. The presence of enthusiastic, vigorous and engaged faculty members is essential for smooth running of universities but the existence of workplace incivility is continuous threat for work engagement of faculty members as it persuades them to be involved in negative rumination. The cross-sectional data was gathered from 465 teaching staff members across three universities in Balochistan using a self-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 27), employing correlation and regression analyses to test direct relationships, and the PROCESS macro (Version 4.0) by Andrew F. Hayes to assess mediation effects. The findings revealed that workplace incivility has a significant positive relation with negative rumination and negative relation with work engagement. Negative rumination further displayed a significant negative association with work engagement. Moreover, results confirmed that the relation between workplace incivility and work engagement is partially mediated by negative rumination. This study advances the existing body of knowledge by uncovering negative rumination as a key psychological construct via which workplace incivility undermines work engagement. The findings offer valuable practical insights for organizations aiming to trim down the harmful effects of workplace incivility and foster greater work engagement.

**KEYWORDS** Workplace Incivility, Negative Rumination, Work Engagement

**Introduction**

The presence of energetic, dedicated, and engaged employees is vital for the success of any organization, and this need is particularly critical in higher education institutions. A high degree of work engagement enhances employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, creativity, and innovative capabilities. However, research suggests that workplace incivility, a subtle yet pervasive form of workplace stressor, can significantly diminish faculty members' engagement levels. This issue has become a growing concern in academic settings, where collegial interactions are essential for productivity and collaboration. Notably, previous studies have reported that nearly 77% of employees in Asian organizations have experienced uncivil behavior at work. (Yeung & Griffin, 2008).

Current study examines direct relationship of workplace incivility "acting rudely or discourteously, without regard for others, in violation of norms for respect in social interactions" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999, p. 455) with work engagement "a positive fulfilling, work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002, p. 74) and indirect relation with work engagement through negative rumination "preoccupation with and repetitive thoughts focused on negative work experiences that may extend beyond the work day" (Frone, 2015, p. 3).

According to Porath and Pearson (2012) study, uncivil behavior negatively affected 98% of the employees in the organization. Workplace incivility as a mental stressor oppresses the work engagement of employees because it signals the victims of uncivil behavior that they are not appreciated and valued by the organization. Prior research revealed the adverse effect of workplace incivility on the work engagement (Aly EL Banan & Abdthrobo, 2020; Beattie & Griffin, 2014; JuGuo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020; Zhang, et al., 2022) but the role of the negative work rumination in relation among workplace incivility and work engagement is not determined.

The current research will add up the existing organizational behavior literature by exploring the role of negative rumination as a mediator in workplace incivility and work engagement relation.

## **Literature Review**

### **Workplace Incivility**

The occurrence of workplace incivility is not restricted to a certain geographic area, it crops up internationally (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016) and it is reported in all type of institutes such as health and care organization, business organization and academic (McCarthy, 2016). The concept of workplace incivility was familiarized by Andersson and Pearson in 1999 in the Academy of Management Review. The uncivil behavior means showing impolite, ill-mannered behavior toward others and breaching the norms of mutual respect but the intensity of such deviant behavior is low and the purpose to damage the target is vague (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). The presence of low intensity and haziness with intentions to impair the target make it different from the other form of workplace mistreatment for instance violence, aggression, abusive supervision and bullying but it is more pervasive than others.

According to Vickers (2006), workplace incivility is "wolf in sheep's clothing". It has the capability to build a bitter atmosphere and values which tolerate and encourage rudeness and disrespect as a habitual custom. It could switch in to more severe kinds of mistreatment such as violence, bullying etc.

The main reason for formation and acceleration of organization conflict spirals is the prevalence of incivility at workplace. The informal climate of the organization and the blistering temperament of instigators or victims of incivility increases the chances of occurrence and escalation of vicious incivility spiral. The occurrence of violence at workplace is not spontaneous, it is the consequence of constant negative interaction among the workers in the form impoliteness (Andersson & Pearson, 1999).

As per Porath & Pearson (2012) study, the targets of workplace incivility respond emotionally in the way of anger, fear and sadness. The anger ends in direct aggression toward the instigator which negatively affects the reputation and relation of the victim. The fear leads to an indirect aggression toward instigators, detachment and absenteeism. It will affect career opportunities and learning opportunities specifically if the initiator has a high position in the organization. The sadness of the victims will increase absenteeism. Research studies have also shown that workplace incivility and social undermining results in counterproductive work behaviors (Mustafa, Durrani, & Durrani, 2023; Mustafa, Durrani & Babar, 2025).

According to Holm, Torkelson, & Backstrom (2015) study, the continuous experience of rude behavior can convert the victim of incivility into instigator of incivility toward the other members of the organization, triggers the sleeping problems and relinquishing the job. It lessens the employees' well-being and job satisfaction. A study conducted by Bartlett, Bartlett, & Reio (2008), revealed that facing uncivil behavior

adversely affects the employee's production, health, interpersonal relation among the employees and relations with the supervisor. It results in toxic atmosphere in organization.

Continuous exposure to the uncivil behavior not only lessens productivity of the employees but also damage their interpersonal relation and result in anxiety, worry, embarrassment and frustration (McCarthy, 2016). The previous research revealed that exposure to uncivil behavior in preschool teachers increases job insecurity and directed them to retaliation (Itzkovich & Dolev, 2019). The impolite behavior trim down the organizational identification and affective commitment of the university faculty members (Guo & Qiu, 2019) and creativity (Zhan, Li, & Luo, 2019).

When employees are subjected to workplace incivility, it results in withdrawal behavior in the form of absenteeism and sluggishness and low performance (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012). Research determines that Despite the fact the workplace incivility is characterized as low intensity and being verbal not physical, the feeling of embarrassment and social isolation are the main reasons of unfavorable result of impolite behavior. It persuades the target to be involved in counter productive work behavior. The workers having high degree of negative affectivity are expected to involve in counterproductive work behavior more easily as compared to others having low level of negative affectivity (Penney & Spector, 2005).

## **Work Engagement**

Work engagement shows a persistent positive state of mind categorized as vigor, dedication and absorption. Vigor denotes immense degree of potency, psychological bounciness along with readiness to devote high levels of energy in work and continue in spite of hurdles. The dedication shows the feelings of eagerness, arrogance, motivation and willingness to face the challenges. Absorption depicts that an individual being entirely focused and willingly absorbed in work and feel that time passes speedily (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Research disclosed that work engagement is distinct from employee engagement as work engagement signifies relationship of workers with work however employee engagement shows the association of the employee with the organization (Pourtousi & Ghanizaden, 2020).

Research has exhibited that work engagement is a positive resource as well as it has positive impact on the organization and employees. According to Bogaert, Wouters, Willems, Delaers, & Clarke (2013), employee work engagement being opposite to burnout, boosts the job satisfaction and retention of the employee in the organization. It also enriches the contextual and task performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011) and job performance of the workers (Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016).

A study conducted by Mukaihata, Fujimoto, & Greiner (2020), revealed that job resources (supervisor support, peer support, job control and reward) and personal resource (emotional intelligence) boost work engagement. Almost in all types of organizations the high level of work engagement improves the organizational performance. The Xu, Liu, & Tang (2022) research also highlighted the eminent role of work engagement in generating and boosting innovative work behavior in the workers in all types of organizations.

High level of work engagement of the employees is a sign of high organizational productivity. It plays a significant role in improved and prime functioning of the organization by dedication, enduring attention and enthusiastic devotion of workers. The worker's good mood at the time of leaving work is a sign of long-term work engagement (Timms, et al., 2015).

The high level of work engagement always ends in positive results for the organization. It increases the motivation level and organizational citizenship behavior of the employees (Thakre & Mathew, 2020). A cross-sectional study conducted by Van Zyl, Oort, Rispens, & Olckers (2019) also depicts that by boosting work engagement of the employees, the innovative work behavior can be triggered in the workers which will improve their task performance.

Prior studies identified some elements that influence the work engagement of the employees. Some have positive impact and others have negative impact on employee's work engagement.

Previous studies highlights that perceived organizational support, affective commitment ( Gupta, Agarwal, & Khatri, 2016), supervisor support ( Othman & Nasurdin, 2013),The job crafting skill and job crafting behavior (Baghdadi, Farghaly, & Alsayed, 2021), the positive work environment ( Aboshaqah, Hamadi, Saleem, & Zakari, 2016;Wang, Zhu, Dormann, Song, & Bakker, 2020) ,The spiritual climate (Cruz, Alquwez, & Balay-odao, 2022), The positive emotions (positive affectivity), proactive personality, conscientiousness and extraversion traits of personality ( Young, Glerum, Wang, & Joseph, 2018 ; Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011), self -efficacy (Doo, Zhu, Bonk, & Tang, 2020) and organizational focus on developing the sense of meaningfulness of work among the employees ( Johnson & Jiang, 2017) positively affect the work engagement of the employees.

A study conducted by Biggs, Brough, & Barbour (2014) indicated that employee's knowledge about the strategic alignment of the organization positively affects their work engagement. The provision of training programs and feedback about performance can enhance strategic know-how of the workers.

Leadership style adopted in the organization also affects the employee's work engagement. The previous studies indicates that transformational style of leadership ( Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011; Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016) and authentic style of leadership ( Giallonardo, Wong, & Iwasiw, 2010) positively affects the work engagement of the workers. The humble behavior of leadership ( Yang, Zhou, Wang, Lin, & Luo, 2019) and focus on intrinsic value preference of employees ( Tuin, Schaufeli, & Broeck, 2021)also enhance the work engagement of the employees.

### **Negative Rumination**

Negative rumination focusses on negative incidents of past or present and results in emotional distress among the employees. It shows employees' propensity to think repeatedly on the happening of some negative events for a long time period. Research revealed that basically the negative rumination comprises excessive thinking practice and negative thinking contents (Randy & Lori, 2012).

As per Reilly, et al. (2019) research, repetitive negative thinking is a continuous process that focuses on negative contents. It consists of rumination and worry. The negative rumination and worry have overlapping psychological construct, for example both contain continuous thinking but different on a few points. Firstly, the negative rumination concentrates on the continuous thinking of negative contents but worry concentrates on the continuous thinking of uncertainty. Secondly negative rumination emphasizes the occurrence of negative incidents in present and past but worry concentrates on the occurring of negative incidents in future. Thirdly negative rumination includes recurring thinking about the loss but in worry continuous thinking focuses on expected threat (Randy & Lori, 2012).

Negative rumination is unhealthy thinking process that involves persistent negative thinking about the happening of negative incidents (Wang, Bowling, Tian, Alarcon, & Kwan,

2018). Therefore, its removal is very tough as its happening is unintentional and usually it ends in grief and sorrow (Martin & Tesser, 1996).

Research indicates that negative rumination causes serious health issues in individuals such as obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety, social anxiety disorder, emotional discomfort, misuse of alcohol and poor physical health (Randy & Lori, 2012) and insomnia (Fritz, Park, & Shephed, 2019). The Pederson, et al.(2011) research study also confirmed that negative rumination adversely affects the physical health of workers and increases blood pressure and cortisol level. It intensifies aggression and aggressive behavior in the employees.

A study conducted by Jalil, Xu, Jiang, & Wang (2022) revealed that negative rumination reduces the problem-solving ability and intensify the experience of negative event which result in job anxiety among the employees. An Australian qualitative study by Sloan, Moulding, Weiner, Dowling, & Hall (2021), explored that negative rumination is the main reason of dysregulated behavior of young individuals. They get involved in deliberate self-harm behavior, binge eating, purging and misusing things to distract their mind from continuous negative thinking.

Negative rumination negatively influences the psychological health of employees by increasing depression among them (Dorio, Demarary, & Riffle, 2021; Hamesch, Cropley, & Lang, 2014). It increases the level of burnout and work to family conflict among the workers and reduces their life satisfaction and job satisfaction ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020).

### Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The Conservation of Resources (COR) theory works as the foundational framework for the current research. COR theory emphasizes the cost-effective use and protection of individuals' emotional, cognitive, and psychological resources. Workplace incivility, as a work stressor, threatens employees' cognitive resources by triggering negative rumination. If this rumination is not regulated, it further depletes a key positive resource of work engagement. As a maladaptive stress-management response, negative rumination can significantly diminish employees' engagement levels. Previous research also supports this view, indicating that work stressors are positively associated with rumination and that individuals tend to ruminate as a reaction to such stressors. (Hamesch, Cropley, & Lang, 2014).

### Theoretical Framework

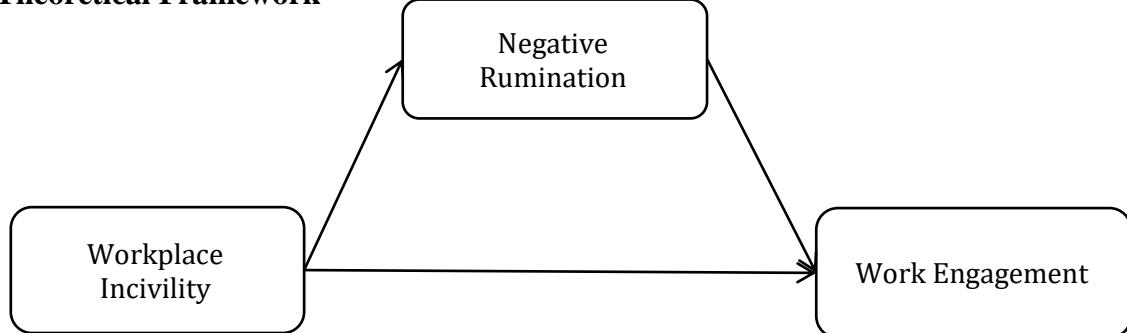


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Within the suggested model, workplace incivility is predictor and work engagement acts as outcome variable. The negative rumination is expected to mediate the relation between workplace incivility and work engagement.

## **Workplace Incivility and Work Engagement**

Research indicated that Job stress negatively affect work engagement ( Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016) therefore being a chronic work stressor it has the ability to negatively affect the workers on the daily basis (Hershcovis, Ogunfowore, Reich, & Christie, 2017) and workplace incivility being a work stressor is also expected to negatively affect the work engagement of the employees. Uncivil workplace behavior refers to discourteous or rude behavior and low level of work engagement is the behavioral outcomes of experiencing such behavior.

Previous research studies revealed that uncivil behavior negatively affect the work engagement. According to Aly EL Banan & Abdthrobo (2020) study, the experience of uncivil behavior shrinks the work engagement of nurses. The Zhang, et al (2022) study suggested that incessant experience of workplace incivility not only burns down the physical, mental energy, and internal motivation of the workers and makes them emotionally exhausted and tired but it also lowers work engagement of the nurses.

A research study conducted in private universities of China also display up the adverse effect of workplace incivility on work engagement of the faculty members (JuGuo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020). An Indonesian study conducted on business industry also confirms the negative association of incivility and work engagement (Beattie & Griffin, 2014). The present research proposed the subsequent hypothesis on the basis of model and prior research.

**H1:** Workplace incivility has a negative relation with work engagement.

## **Workplace Incivility and Negative Rumination**

In keeping with stress theory the experience of stressors can trigger stress evaluations in which the traumatic incidents are appraised as harmful and looming, directing people to involve in handling tactics for instance rumination ( Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) ,to the same degree Workplace incivility being a workplace stressor ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020 ; Alola, Avci, & Ozturen, 2020; Anjum, Liang, Durrani, & Pervez, 2020; Hur, Han, & Kim, 2019) has a positive association with negative rumination ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020; Fritz, Park, & Shephed, 2019 ; Vahle-Hinz, Baethga, & Dick, 2019).

Research discloses that uncivil behavior leads to insomnia in the employees due to negative rumination, which mediate the relation between workplace incivility and insomnia (Fritz, Park, & Shephed, 2019).

A research study done on faculty members determined that negative rumination is the main cause of negative relation between uncivil behavior and life satisfaction and job satisfaction of employees. It further results in emotional exhaustion and work to family conflict ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020).The organization should take serious measures to reduce the repetitive negative thinking among the employees as the presence of negative rumination intensified the negative effect of violence on the employees' health and well-being (Niven, Sprigg, Armitage, & Satchwell, 2013).The following hypothesis is suggested on the basis of literature and model.

**H2:** workplace incivility has a positive association with negative rumination

## **Negative Rumination and Work Engagement**

Previous research showed that negative rumination negatively affects the employees' health and well-being (Niven, Sprigg, Armitage, & Satchwell, 2013) and has a negative relation with different job-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, family

support, work environment, job satisfaction and life satisfaction ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020) so it is expected that it will also has a negative relation with work engagement.

Recently A research done on 930 employees of Chinese central enterprises revealed that negative rumination has a significant negative relation ( $\beta=0.35$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) with work engagement of the employees (Min & Li, 2024). So, the following hypothesis is suggested on the basis of previous literature

**H3:** Negative rumination has a negative relation with work engagement

### **Negative Rumination as a Mediator**

Previous research studies reveal that negative rumination play the role of mediator among the different work stressors and job-related outcome variables. In accordance with Wang, Bowling, Tian, Alarcon, & Kwan (2018) study, negative rumination plays the role of mediator in workplace harassment intensity and revenge relation. Generally, the term workplace harassment is deemed similar to workplace incivility, bullying and aggression.

A study conducted on the effect of violence on employee well-being and health depicts that negative rumination plays a central role in this relation. The employees having a tendency toward engaging in negative repetitive thinking on the exposure to violence are expected to more intensely spoil their well-being and health. Research confirmed the intervening role of negative rumination in relation between violence, employee's well-being and health (Niven, Sprigg, Armitage, & Satchwell, 2013).

A study conducted by He, Walker, Payne, & Miner (2020), also confirmed the intervening role of negative rumination in relation between workplace incivility and life satisfaction and job satisfaction of the employees. So, on the basis of literature it is assumed that negative rumination will play mediating role in the present research, and the subsequent hypothesis is suggested.

**H4:** Negative rumination mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and work engagement.

### **Material and Methods**

The present study uses deductive and quantitative methods in according to research questions and objectives.

### **Research Design**

Current study is descriptive, explanatory and correlational as it describes direct relation and indirect relation among workplace incivility and work engagement by negative rumination as well as explains the reasons for such relation.

### **Sampling Methods**

The target population was the faculty members of the three main public sector universities of Balochistan situated at Quetta city. The stratified random sampling method is used for data collection.

### **Data Collection Method**

Survey method was employed in the current study data. The cross-sectional data collection method is used, and the data was gathered through self-administered structured questionnaires. The reliability of scales used was verified by Cronbach alpha test. The

relation among the variables was checked through correlation and regression through SPSS 27 version. The mediation was checked by process macro by hays.

## **Demographic Information**

In the current study 550 questionnaires were distributed among the target population, in which 480 questionnaires were returned by the respondents. After removing 15 questionnaires which are not properly filled such as missing answers, the final sample size for the study was 465. The demographic profile revealed that male respondents were 249(53.5%) and female respondents were 216(46.5%). The educational qualification of the respondents was divided into three categories, Masters, MS/MPhil and PhD. The faculty members having master's degree are 41(8.8%), having MS/MPhil degree are 239 (51.4%) and having PhD degree are 185 (39.8%). The experience of the participants was divided into four categories from 1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years and above 15 years. The 26% faculty members have experience of 1 to 5 years, 31.6% faculty members have experience of 6 to 10 years, 18.7% faculty members have experience of 11 to 15 years, and 23.7% faculty members have experience of teaching in the university over 15 years.

## **Variables and Measurement**

### **Workplace Incivility**

The seven items scale established by Cortina (2001) on five-point Likert scale was used to assess incivility. The responses range from never =1 to very often =5. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for workplace incivility was .896 and it is acceptable according to previous study (Ahmed, 2019).

### **Work engagement**

The nine items scale constructed by Schaufeli, Bakker and Salanova 2006 on five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate work engagement. The answers range from never =1 to very often = 5. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for work engagement was .88 and it is also consistent with previous study ( Bouckenooghe & Mengue, 2018).

### **Negative Rumination**

Negative rumination was evaluated by four items scaled developed by Michael R Frone (2015) on five-point Likert scale. The answers ranged from never =1 to very often =5. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for negative rumination was .843 and it was also within the acceptable range (Table:1).

**Table:1**  
**Reliability Statistics**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha (<math>\alpha</math>)</b>
Workplace incivility	.896
Work engagement	.880
Negative rumination	.843

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Descriptives and Correlation Analysis**

The descriptive statistics and correlation among the variables are presented in table 2. The correlational analysis shows that workplace incivility has a significant negative association with work engagement ( $r = -.585$ ,  $n=465$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and positive relation with negative rumination ( $r = .568$ ,  $n=465$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). It is found that negative rumination has a significant negative relationship with work engagement ( $r = -.67$ ,  $n=465$ ,  $p<0.01$ ).

**Table 2**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

Variables	Mean	SD	Workplace Incivility	Work Engagement	Negative Rumination
Workplace incivility	2.784	0.950	1		
Work engagement	3.233	0.758	-.585**	1	
Negative rumination	3.334	0.857	.568**	-.667**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
n= 465, SD= Standard Deviation

### Regression Analysis

The first three hypotheses of the study were tested through regression analysis. According to first hypothesis workplace incivility has a negative relation with work engagement and the regression test supported it. The F statistics for the first hypothesis was ( $F = 240.354$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) which approves the fitness of model for work engagement. The  $R^2$  value is .34 which shows that workplace incivility explains 34% of variation in work engagement of the faculty members. It is proved that workplace incivility has a significant negative influence on the work engagement ( $\beta = -.466$ ,  $t = -15.503$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and it is concluded that incivility reduces the work engagement.

The second hypothesis of the study tested the workplace incivility relation with negative rumination. The regression test demonstrated the significant F statistics ( $F = 220.672$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) for the second hypothesis which endorsed the fitness of regression model for negative rumination. The  $R^2$  value for negative rumination was .323 which indicates that workplace incivility explains 32.3% of variation in negative rumination. The regression test showed that workplace incivility has significant positive impact on negative rumination ( $\beta = 0.512$ ,  $t = 14.855$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results are given in table 3 and 4.

**Table 3**  
**Regression Analysis**

Variables	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P- values
Work Engagement	.340	240.354	< 0.001
Negative Rumination	.323	220.672	< 0.001

Independent Variable: Workplace Incivility

**Table 4**  
**Regression Analysis**

Variables	$\beta$	t	p-values
Work Engagement	-.466	-15.503	<0.001
Negative Rumination	.512	14.855	<0.001

Independent Variable: Workplace Incivility

The third hypothesis of the study proposed negative association of negative rumination and work engagement, and findings of the regression analysis verified it. The significant F statistics ( $F = 370.06$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) for the third hypothesis supports the fitness of regression model. The  $R^2 = 0.44$  value indicates that negative rumination explains 44 % of variation in work engagement. The regression test showed that negative rumination has a significant negative effect on work engagement of faculty members ( $\beta = -0.589$ ,  $t = -19.237$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results are given in Table 5.

**Table 5**  
**Regression Analysis**

Variables	$\beta$	t	p-values
Work Engagement	-.589	-19.237	<0.001
F	370.060		<0.001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.444		

Independent Variable: Negative Rumination

## Mediation

Model 4 of Process macro V4.0 by Andrew F. Hayes was utilized to test the mediating role of negative rumination in workplace incivility and work engagement relation. The findings (Table 6) revealed that workplace incivility has a significant direct and indirect relation with work engagement through negative rumination. It is found that on the experience of uncivil behavior the employees respond in the form of negative rumination which in turn reduced the work engagement of the employees. Therefore, organization should also focus on addressing the negative thinking of the employees on the exposure to workplace incivility while plaining to mitigate the negative influence of workplace incivility on the work engagement of the faculty members.

**Table 6**  
**Mediation Results**

Relationship	Indirect Effect	Boot SE	LL 95%CI	UL 95%CI
WPI---NR---WEG	-.2237	0.0258	-.2782	-.1761

Note

1. WPI = Workplace Incivility (Independent variable)
2. NR = Negative Rumination (Mediator)
3. WEG = Work Engagement (Dependent variable)
4. LL95%CI = lower limit 95% Confidence Interval
5. UL95%CI= upper limit 95% Confidence Interval
6. SE= Standard Error

## Discussion

The key objective of research was to uncover the reaction of faculty members in the form of negative rumination on the exposure of uncivil behavior at workplace and in return how it affects their work engagement. Notably, this is the first study to explain the mediating role of negative rumination in workplace incivility and work engagement relation by the lens of Conservation of Resources (COR) theory.

The first hypothesis proposed a negative association between workplace incivility and work engagement of faculty members. The findings support this hypothesis. The analysis indicated a significant negative association between workplace incivility and work engagement. The regression further confirmed the negative impact of workplace incivility on the work engagement of the faculty members and these results are in line with the prior research such as ( Schmitt, Den Hartog, & Belschak, 2016; Aly EL Banan & Abdthrobo, 2020; Zhang, et al., 2022; JuGuo, Qiu, & Gan, 2020; Beattie & Griffin, 2014).

The second hypothesis examined the workplace incivility positive relation with negative rumination, and the results supported this assumption. Both the correlation analysis and regression analysis confirmed a significant positive association between workplace incivility and negative rumination. The previous studies such as ( He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020; Fritz, Park, & Shephed, 2019; Vahle-Hinz, Baethga, & Dick, 2019) supported the current findings.

The third hypothesis proposed that negative rumination has a negative relation with work engagement of faculty members. The correlation and regression analysis supported this hypothesis. Notably, limited research has examined the association between negative rumination and work engagement. Recently research investigated this relationship (Min & Li, 2024), and findings of the current study are in line with it.

The fourth hypothesis examined the mediating role of negative rumination in the relationship between workplace incivility and work engagement. To test this hypothesis,

the study employed Model 4 of Hayes' PROCESS Macro. It was found that workplace incivility had significant direct and indirect influence on work engagement by negative rumination. The present research is the primary study to investigate and establish the mediating role of negative rumination in the workplace incivility and work engagement relationship. However, the previous research studies confirmed the mediating role of negative rumination in the relation between violence, health and well-being of employees (Niven, Sprigg, Armitage, & Satchwell, 2013) and in relation between workplace incivility and life satisfaction and job satisfaction (He, Walker, Payne, & Miner, 2020).

The mediating role of negative rumination can be explained on the basis of conservation of resources (COR) theory. Employees who experience uncivil behavior from supervisors or coworkers expend their emotional and cognitive resources through negative rumination, which ultimately reduces their level of work engagement and reflects a loss of valuable resources. Thus, negative rumination serves as the primary mechanism through which workplace incivility adversely affects work engagement. By depleting emotional and cognitive resources, negative rumination diminishes employees' capacity to restore and sustain positive resources such as work engagement.

## **Conclusion**

Grounded in the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, the present study concludes that experiences of workplace incivility trigger negative rumination among faculty members. This depletes their emotional and cognitive resources, ultimately leading to reduced levels of work engagement. The findings indicate that negative rumination serves as the primary mechanism through which workplace incivility undermines faculty engagement. Therefore, university administrators should adopt comprehensive and proactive measures to prevent and mitigate uncivil behaviors among faculty in order to foster a positive and supportive work environment.

## **Recommendations**

The present research has significant practical implications for universities, particularly because the data were gathered from three public sector universities in Balochistan. The results indicate that workplace incivility not only reduces faculty members' work engagement but also increases their negative rumination, which in turn mediates this relationship. Previous research has shown that negative rumination adversely affects employees' well-being, contributing to insomnia, emotional exhaustion, and even aggression. It also diminishes both job satisfaction and life satisfaction. Therefore, considering the various negative outcomes associated with workplace incivility and negative rumination, university authorities should adopt a zero-tolerance policy toward uncivil behavior and work toward fostering a positive work environment grounded in mutual respect and professional conduct. Additionally, organizations should strengthen communication channels between the administration and department heads, between faculty members and their colleagues, and between department heads and staff.

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