

Customer incivility and employees' outcomes in the hotel: Testing the mediating role of emotional exhaustion



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ABSTRACT

A logical position emphasized by the service-oriented organizations that 'the customer is always right' and the organizational policies that requires employees to make customer happy, even in situations involving customer uncivil behavior has continued to be one of the antecedents of employees' negative outcomes. Applying the conservation of resources theory (COR), the current study develops and tests a research model that investigates the relationships between customer incivility (CIVT), emotional exhaustion (EEXT), turnover intentions (TINT) and job satisfaction (JSAT). A total of 328 customer-contact employees in 4 and 5 star hotels in Nigeria participated. Using structural equation modeling, the findings demonstrate that CIVT increases EEXT and TINT, but has no direct influence on JSAT. The findings demonstrate that EEXT partially mediates the effect of CIVT on TINT while it fully mediates the effect of CIVT on JSAT. Implications of the findings for the literature and limitation are discussed.

1. Introduction

The reliance of the tourism and hospitality industry on human capital to guarantee organization's success and provide exceptional service delivery in the rapidly changing competitive market environment explains why the industry remains important to the managers and scholars (Zopiatis, Constanti, & Theocharous, 2014). That also explains why strain (Chen & Kao, 2012), service sabotage (Zhou, Ma, & Dong, 2018), turnover behavior (Zopiatis et al., 2014), excessive job demands, and dysfunctional customer behaviors (Dai, Chen, & Zhuang, 2016) are prevalent in the industry. Studies have begun to raise concerns on the workplace mistreatment and its consequences on the work outcomes (Schilpzand, Leavitt, & Lim, 2016) while a pool of research investigating the profound negative impacts of CIVT on service employees' work-related outcomes have begun to receive attention (Han, Bonn, & Cho, 2016; Sakurai & Jex, 2012).

Customer-contact employees, especially in the service-oriented organizations are exposed to the stressful workplace environment usually associated with complaints and frustrations of customer unpleasant behavior, coworkers, or an angry supervisor (Sakurai & Jex, 2012; Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010). These customer-contact employees are required to operate under the position that 'the customer is always right' even in situations involving bad-mannered customers

(Sliter et al., 2010). Ensuring that customers are pleased at all times alone can be an emotionally exhausting task, while creating a welcoming environment, faking emotions and appearing pleasant, no matter the situation can heighten pressure, leading to detrimental effects on their overall work outcomes and wellbeing (Chu, Baker, & Murmann, 2012). Under such circumstances, customer-contact employees become increasingly unhappy and unable to focus on their job and are likely to display negative outcomes such as task-related stress, psychological withdrawal behavior, poor performance, EEXT and diminished motivation (Porath & Pearson, 2010; Schilpzand, Leavitt, & Lim, 2016; Van Jaarsveld, Walker, & Skarlicki, 2010).

Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined incivility as "low intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (p. 447). Despite its low intensity and uncertain nature, workplace incivility is considered one of the most dreadful forms of misconduct on service employees (Sliter et al., 2010). For instance, empirical confirmation shows that rudeness affects how an individual function at work, reduces work engagement, hinders creativity and ability to perform tasks (Porath, Foulk, & Erez, 2015; Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016). In Porath and Pearson's (2010) study, nearly 99% of the nine thousand (9000) employees studied reported seeing the occurrence of incivility in their workplace. In hotels in South Korea, Hur, Moon, and Jun (2016) reported that customer

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incivility (CIVT) increased service employees' emotional exhaustion (EEXT), and EEXT in turn diminished their intrinsic motivation at work. Incivility may occur either during employee-to-employee interactions or customer-to-employee interactions. However, incivility is interpersonal deviance, usually, the perpetrators exhibit such behavior as a way to avail themselves, intentionally harm targets, or organizations and such uncivil behavior might simply be out of consciousness or such behavior might simply be claimed as unintentional by the perpetrator (Porath & Pearson, 2010; Sliter et al., 2010). How incivility perpetrated by external (customers) is interpreted and handled by the victims (employees), and the likely consequences of such actions on the employees' outcomes and organizational effectiveness are still a major concern for the managers and scholars (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016; Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010). Therefore, a strong theoretical framework on incivility is required to make it easier for managers and scholars to understand its implications on the employees' work-related outcomes and overall organizational effectiveness.

Studies have also demonstrated that the victim of incivility tends to exhibit low levels of affective wellbeing, higher TINT and are less satisfied with their work (Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Penney & Spector, 2005; Sakurai, Jex, & Gillespie, 2011). Employees experience incivility on a regular basis or may have, at one time witnessed it, nevertheless, its effects on some selected work outcomes such as turnover intentions (TINT) and job satisfaction (JSAT), especially in Nigeria - a Sub-Sahara African nation are the underlying assumption of this study.

Research has also shown that inadequate practices of human resource are still rampant in the tourism and hotel industry and similar practices are evident in Nigeria (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). Most service-oriented organizations rely on the services of consultants to recruit and select best candidates to fill their frontline positions. Like any organizations, contact-customer hotel employees in Nigeria are expected to manage their emotions and appear pleasant during the service delivery process, inconsequential of their inner feelings, must adhere to the organizationally desired emotion to ensure customer satisfaction. However, these employees are susceptible to EEXT - a work-related strain that reduces individual emotional resources as a result of excessive psychological demands (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009). Such work-related strain has been found to impede organizational effectiveness. For instance, Karatepe and Aleshinloye's (2009) study demonstrated that EEXT reduced job performance, increased TINT, and was positively associated with emotional labor in Nigerian hotel industry. Likewise, Wright and Cropanzano (1998) reported a negative correlation between EEXT and job performance. In other words, it appears that emotionally exhausted employees lack the required intellectual resources to reciprocate uncivil customer with civility (Van Jaarsveld et al., 2010).

Acknowledging the empirical evidence of inadequate human resource practices (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016) and calls for more work on incivility for better understanding of its ubiquitous and costly behavior in the workplace (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016), this study develops and tests a research model that investigate the relationships between stressor (i.e. Customer incivility (CIVT) and emotional exhaustion (EEXT)) and some selected employees' outcomes (i.e. Turnover intentions (TINT) and job satisfaction (JSAT)). Specifically, the study investigates (a) the impact of CIVT on EEXT, TINT and JSAT; (b) the impact of EEXT on TINT and JSAT; and (c) the role of EEXT as a mediator of the effects of CIVT on TINT and JSAT. Data used in the current study were obtained from customer-contact employees in 4 and 5 star hotels in Nigeria. Research evidence from customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria are still relatively underrepresented in the management literature (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017).

Likewise, a body of research on CIVT has used samples from bank tellers (Sliter et al., 2010), retail sales employees (Wilson & Holmval, 2013), customer service and sales employees (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008), and engineering firm employees (Adams & Webster, 2013).

However, evidence from customer-contact hotel employees is limited. Therefore, strengthening the theoretical underpinning of CIVT and validating its findings requires more empirical evidence from a variety of samples from different industries and professions (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016). Finally, studies have also indicated that CIVT is a universal common phenomenon, however, different cultural context are likely to influence how it is perpetrated, interpreted, handled, and the likely implications on the employees' outcomes and organizational effectiveness (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016). Such findings will broaden our understanding of customer incivility and contributes to the incivility management literature.

2. The Nigeria context

In 1960, the Africa's most populous country, Nigeria obtained its independence from Great Britain, but not until 1963 when it eventually became a federal republic (Okpara, 2006; Olugbade, 2016). Nigeria is a developing Sub-Sahara African nation with a populace of about 173 million (World Bank, 2014) and is also well-known for its rich ethnic diversity comprising more than 250 tribal groups of diverse customs, dialects, and ethnicities. Despite such diversity, English is the nations' collective language (Karatepe & Magaji, 2008; Okpara, 2006; Olugbade, 2016). As reported in Olugbade's (2016) study, for so many years, Nigeria has been experiencing issues such as corruption, poor infrastructure, political uncertainty, high levels of unemployment, non-existent welfare system, the militia unrest in the Niger-Delta region and the ongoing intense religious conflict in the Northern region of the nation. An unpredictable workplace setting has also compounded the nations' existing problems leading to gender unfairness, lack of job security, poor remuneration, and extended working hours (Olugbade, 2016).

The Nigerian tourism and hospitality industry are gradually progressing and has been reported to have contributed substantially towards the nations' Gross Domestic Product (GDP). For instance, Adeola and Ezenwafor (2016) reported that between 1980 and 2006, the tourism and hospitality industry contributed millions of dollars ranging from US\$3 million to US\$12 million towards Nigeria's GDP. Despite being regulated by a multi-sectoral tourism industry, a clear policy that will transform the nation's tourism and hospitality industry must be developed and implemented by the government. Furthermore, the absence of contemporary practices of human resource in service organizations is still a major challenge in Nigeria (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016).

3. Theoretical background and hypothesis development

The conservation of resources theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989) is the theoretical underpinning used to develop the hypothesized relationships in the current research. The theory suggests that employees are inclined to acquire, maintain, and preserve certain resources that helps them through job tasks. The COR theory explains the process of how employees cope and respond to work stress. The theory acknowledged four types of resources: the object (e.g. Tangible benefit that individual invests), social support (e.g. Which adds to the employees' better condition), employee personal characteristics (e.g. Skills), and energy resources (e.g. Money and knowledge) (Hobfoll, 1989). The theory posits that an individual becomes stressed when he/she is not capable of gaining resources invested in the workplace, risk of losing resources or loss of resources occurs. Employees in the service industry are prone to strain such as depression (Pizam, 2008), emotional dissonance (Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2009; Phillips, Tsu Wee Tan, & Julian, 2006), and EEXT (Karatepe et al., 2009; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009) more than any industry due to the characteristics of work in the industry. Therefore, customer-contact hotel employees are likely to become stressed and risk losing their accumulated resources while trying to create a welcoming environment, control their emotions and appear

pleasant in the process of service delivery that involves uncivil behavior from customers.

3.1. Customer incivility, emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions and job satisfaction

Empirical evidence on workplace incivility has largely focused on the occurrence of uncivil behavior during employee-to-employee interactions (Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Reio, 2011) and its consequences on work outcomes such as satisfaction, strain (Lim & Cortina, 2005), absenteeism (Sliter, Sliter, & Jex, 2012), and TINT (Lim et al., 2008), while evidence of incivility during customer-to-employee interactions and its consequences is gradually emerging (Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2012; Walker, van Jaarsveld, & Skarlicki, 2014).

The COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) contends that employees are inclined to acquire, maintain, and preserve certain resources that helps them through job tasks, while they also risk losing the resources, incapable of gaining invested resources or actual loss of resources when they are confounded with strain. On the one hand, service-oriented organizations provide opportunities for the customer-contact employees to acquire and retain resources, on the other hand, the nature of their work expose them to stress that pose a threat of loss of accumulated resources (Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2012). Customer-contact hotel employees are in regular face-to-face or voice-to-voice interaction with customers, providing excellent service and ensuring customer satisfaction (Karatepe et al., 2009). During these interactions, customer-contact hotel employees expect the customers to reciprocate their good manners with civility. If such reciprocation of civil behavior occurs, customer-contact hotel employees either gain resources or maintain the accumulated resources. However, if such reciprocation of civility fails to occur, customer-contact hotel employees risk losing their accumulated resources or experience threats of loss of accumulated resources. Due to the competitive nature of the hotel industry and the customers' expectations of exceptional service delivery and satisfaction (Piccoli, Lui, & Grün, 2017), these employees must adhere to the organization's rules and regulations, create a welcoming environment, control their emotions and appear pleasant, making sure that customers are always delighted. Such demands alone can be an emotionally exhausting task, while encounters with rude or disrespectful customers are likely to heighten pressure, which can affect their overall work outcomes and wellbeing (Chu et al., 2012). For instance, Sliter et al. (2012) found that CIVT increased withdrawal behavior and absenteeism, while it reduced sales performance among bank tellers in 32 branches. According to Walker et al. (2014), event CIVT incited insurance customer service employee incivility in central Canada. Likewise, Han et al. (2016) reported that CIVT had a significant positive relationship with burnout among frontline restaurant employees. Thus, we proposed the hypotheses that:

- H1. Customer incivility will positively influence emotional exhaustion.
- H2. Customer incivility will positively influence turnover intentions.
- H3. Customer incivility will negatively influence job satisfaction.

3.2. Emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions and job satisfaction

EEXT – associated with workplace strain occurs when employees are exposed to excessive psychological demands which drain their energy and emotional resources (Boles, Johnston, & Hair, 1997; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009). The boundary-spanning role of customer-contact hotel employees makes them prone to experiencing physical, psychological and emotional weariness at workplace (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Feelings are important mechanism, and as such, it influences individual reaction to events. Therefore, it is not unusual for the customer-contact employees in service organizations to display negative

work-related outcomes or health problems (Chen & Kao, 2012; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). TINT and JSAT are the two selected employee's outcomes investigated in this study.

Research has demonstrated that TINT is the immediate antecedent to actual turnover behavior, and its associated high costs have been a major concern for the service providers (Li, Kim, & Zhao, 2017; Mohsin, Lengler, & Aguzzoli, 2015). Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, Warren, and De Chermont (2003) defined TINT as “willingness to leave an organization” (p. 918). Research has established EEXT as an antecedent of TINT. For instance, Karatepe and Aleshinloye's (2009) study with a sample of hotel employees in Nigeria demonstrated that EEXT increased TINT. Yavas, Babakus, and Karatepe (2008) reported that EEXT was significantly and positively associated with TINT among customer-contact employees in the Turkish hotels. Based on COR theory, customer-contact employees are emotionally drained once they perceive a threat of loss of the resources, a risk of loss of the accumulated resources or are unable to get returns on the invested resources at work (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009). Under such circumstances, customer-contact employees become unhappy and are most likely to seek job opportunities in other organizations. For that reason, we proposed the hypothesis that:

- H4. Emotional exhaustion will positively influence turnover intentions.

According to Locke (1969), JSAT is “the pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values” (p. 316). Feelings at work is a significant mechanism that influences how employees function and behave towards their work role (Zopiatis et al., 2014). Therefore, one can measure accurately the degree of employee satisfaction at work through their emotions and behavior towards their work role (Zopiatis et al., 2014). Mulki, Jaramillo, and Locander (2006) indicated that EEXT and lower levels of JSAT cannot be separated. Other studies have also found significant negative correlation (–.64) between EEXT and JSAT (Grandey, 2003). Emotionally exhausted employees become frustrated when they are unable to perform their work role and most often, such employees will develop negative behavior towards their organizations (Mulki et al., 2006). As suggested by the COR theory, employees who find it hard to cope with their work role due to lack of resources or insufficient resources are likely to show nonchalant attitude at work and experience job dissatisfaction. Thus, we proposed the hypothesis that:

- H5. Emotional exhaustion will negatively influence job satisfaction.

3.3. The emotional exhaustion as a mediator

Maslach (1993) suggested that EEXT arises when employees are ripped off emotionally from their resources. Empirical evidence linking EEXT to TINT and JSAT has been established (Grandey, 2003; Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009; Mulki et al., 2006; Yavas et al., 2008). High job demands increased EEXT, EEXT in turn drains employee's emotional resources (Ladebo & Awotunde, 2007). EEXT is high when employees perceive that they lack physical and psychological resources to perform job tasks (Mulki et al., 2006). Customer-contact hotel employees are required to fake their emotions in the process of service delivery (e.g. Encounters with unruly customers) can be an emotionally exhausting task, heighten pressure and often lead to negative work-related outcomes and health problems (Chu et al., 2012; Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016). Specifically, interactions between customer-contact hotel employees and disrespectful customers can heighten pressure on employees' behavior, which leads to EEXT when they perceive threats of loss of resources or are unable to gain returns on their invested resources, EEXT in turn can further heighten their feelings leading to TINT and job dissatisfaction.

Thus, we proposed the hypotheses that:

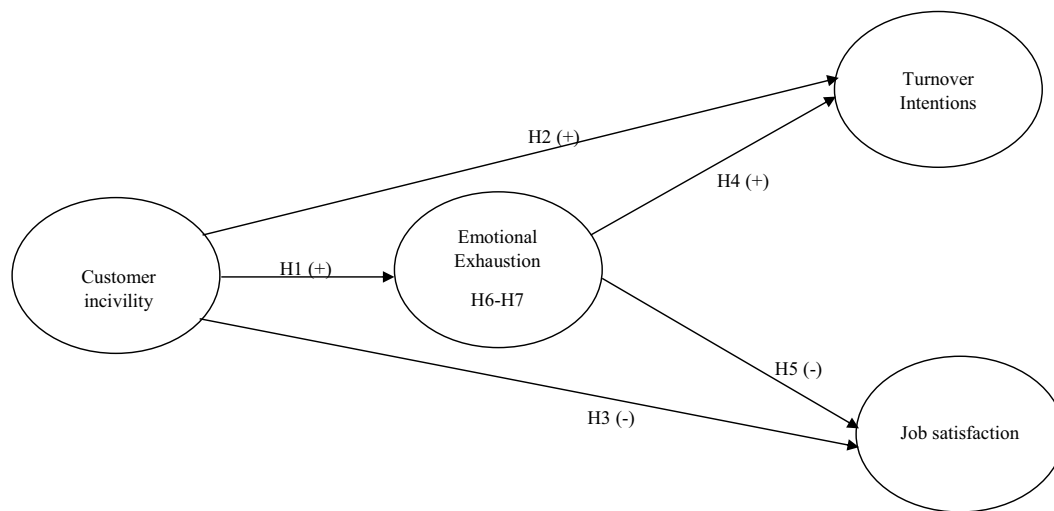


Fig. 1. Research model.

H6. Emotional exhaustion will mediate the influence of customer incivility on turnover intentions.

H7. Emotional exhaustion will mediate the influence of customer incivility on job satisfaction (Fig. 1).

4. Research methodology

4.1. Sampling and procedures

Data was obtained from customer-contact employees in the 4 and 5 star hotels in Lagos state and Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Preceding the distribution of the questionnaire, a letter which explained the research objectives was sent to the management of these hotels to seek permission to collect data and assured them of confidentiality.

A preliminary study was carried out with a sample of 32 customer-contact hotel employees (e.g. Bell agent, concierges, front desk agents, etc.) to ensure that the questionnaire was detailed and comprehensible. However, there was no need for the modification of the instrument after the pilot test. The researcher initially distributed a total of 500 questionnaires to the customer-contact employees in unsealed envelopes. The questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes and responses were anonymous. The reason for the sealed envelopes and anonymous was to decrease the possible threat of common method and selection bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Out of the 500 distributed questionnaires, only 328 completed questionnaires returned were used for the study. Those incomplete questionnaires were excluded. Overall, a response rate of 65.6% was recorded.

4.2. Measures

4.2.1. Customer incivility (CIVT)

CIVT was measured with six items taken from Cho, Bonn, Han, and Lee (2016). Sample items include ‘customers take out anger on me’. Responses to the items were based on the five-point scale options (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = 0.88$).

4.2.2. Emotional exhaustion (EEXT)

EEXT was measured with five items adopted from Moore (2000). Sample items include ‘I feel emotionally drained from my work’. Responses to the items were based on the five-point scale options (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = 0.90$).

4.2.3. Turnover intentions (TINT)

TINT was measured with three items adopted from Karatepe (2013). Sample items include ‘I will probably quit this job next year’. Responses to the items were based on the five-point scale options (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = 0.89$).

4.2.4. Job satisfaction (JSAT)

JSAT was measured with three items adopted from Lee and Ok (2012). Sample items include ‘My job gives me feeling that I am accomplished’. Responses to the items were based on the five-point scale options (e.g., 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree) ($\alpha = 0.88$).

4.3. Data analysis

The measurement model (convergent and discriminant validity) and internal consistency reliability (composite reliability) were tested with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The second step involved the use of structural equation modeling to assess the postulated relationships. A bootstrapping method with 5000 sample-size generated at 95% confidence interval (CI) was adopted to test the significance of the indirect effects analysis via Amos 20 (Arbuckle, 2011).

Minimum discrepancy (CMIN) with degrees of freedom (DF), parsimony normed fit index (PNFI); incremental fit index (IFI); comparative fit index (CFI); standardized root mean square residual (SRMR); root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were used to estimate the measurement and structural models (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

5. Results

5.1. Sample characteristics

The result of sample characteristics is shown in Table 1. The result of the study sample of 328 customer-contact hotel employees comprised of 222 (67.7%) male and 106 (32.3%) female. The participants' ages range from 18 to 50 years. While most of the participants 185 (54.4%) had a Master's degree, their marital status revealed that 157 (47.6%) participants were single and their work experience ranged from 1 to 7 years.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics.

Frequency %		
Age		
18–25	40	12.2
26–33	122	37.2
34–41	137	41.8
42–49	26	7.9
50 above	3	0.9
Gender		
Male	222	67.7
Female	106	32.3
Marital status		
Single	157	47.9
Married	153	46.6
Divorced	15	4.6
Widow/widower	3	0.9
Education		
Primary school	4	1.2
Secondary	40	12.2
Graduate	99	30.2
Masters	185	56.4
Organizational tenure		
Less than a year	99	30.2
1–3	89	27.1
4–6	102	31.1
7 and above	38	11.6

5.2. Psychometric properties of the measures

This sample was subjected to normality checks. Kurtosis and skewness values for the 17 items ranged from (–0.394 to –0.720) and from (–0.055 to 0.035) respectively. Thus, the items conform to the assumptions of confirmatory factor analysis for the sample (Hair et al., 2010). The factor loadings were all significant ($p < .001$) with the following acceptable fit statistics: CMIN = 431.817; DF = 113; CMIN/DF = 3.82; CFI = 0.91; IFI = 0.91; PNFI = 0.73; RMSEA = 0.093; SRMR = 0.066 (Hair et al., 2010). As demonstrated (see Table 2), all measurement items loaded well on their respective factors and exceeds the threshold of 0.50, supporting the convergent validity of the

Table 2
Scale items and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) results.

Scale items	Loadings	t-Value	CR	AVE	α
<i>Customer incivility</i>			0.86	0.52	0.88
Customer took out their anger on me	0.91	1.00 ^a			
Customers made insulting comments on me	0.86	19.59			
Customers treat employees as if they were inferior or stupid	0.64	12.70			
Customers showed that they are irritated or impatient	0.64	12.83			
Customers do not trust the information that I gave them and ask to speak with someone of higher Authority	0.61	11.89			
Customer made comments that question the competency of me	0.60	11.74			
<i>Emotional exhaustion</i>			0.90	0.62	0.90
I fell emotionally drained from my work	0.74	1.00 ^a			
I feel used up at the end of the work	0.81	14.34			
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at job	0.86	15.14			
Working all day is really a strain for me	0.75	13.22			
I feel burned out from my work	0.76	13.37			
<i>Turnover intentions</i>			0.89	0.73	0.89
It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year	0.82	1.00 ^a			
I often think about quitting	0.94	19.21			
I will probably quit this job next year	0.78	16.48			
<i>Job satisfaction</i>			0.88	0.72	0.88
My job gives me feeling that I am accomplished	0.81	1.00 ^a			
I find real enjoyment with my job	0.90	17.86			
I feel satisfied with this job	0.82	16.50			

Model fit statistics: CMIN = 269.710; DF = 110; CMIN/df = 2.45; CFI = 0.95; IFI = 0.95; PNFI = 0.73; RMSEA = 0.067; SRMR = 0.071.

Note: All loadings are significant at the 0.001 level. CMIN (Minimum discrepancy); DF (Degrees of freedom); CFI (Comparative fit index); IFI (Incremental fit index); PNFI (Parsimony normed fit index); RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation); SRMR (Standardized root mean square residual).

^a Item scale fixed at 1.00.

Table 3
Means, standard deviation and correlations of all variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Customer incivility	2.87	0.93	–			
2. Emotional exhaustion	3.21	0.91	0.35**	–		
3. Turnover intentions	3.14	0.89	0.28**	0.31**	–	
4. Job satisfaction	2.88	1.02	–0.19**	–0.29**	–0.53**	–

Note: SD (Standard deviation).

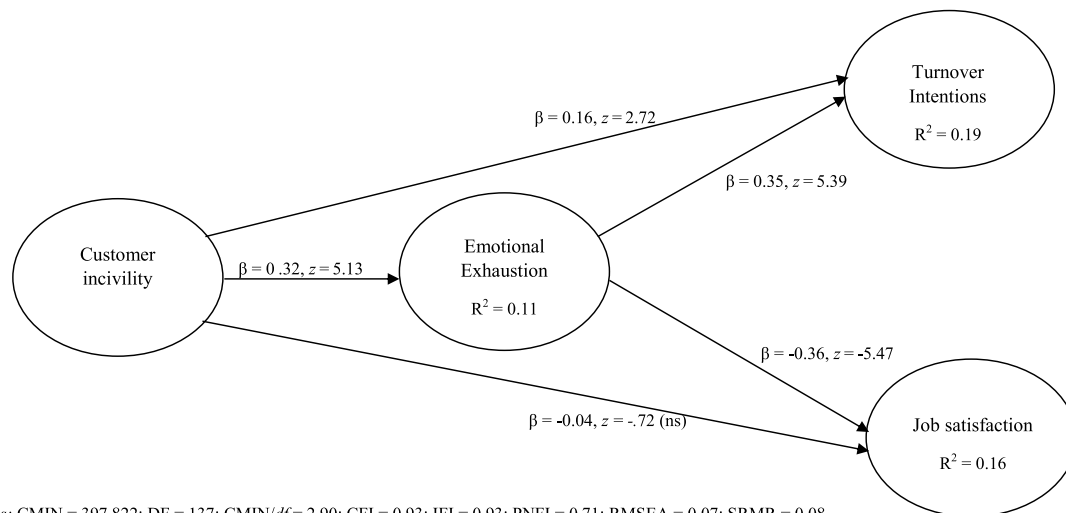
** Correlations are significant at the $p < .01$ level (two-tailed).

measures (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). To establish the discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all pairs of construct were compared to the squared correlation of the other constructs. The value of AVE for each construct was greater than the squared correlation of other constructs demonstrating support for discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The findings (see Table 2) also revealed that composite reliability score was greater than 0.60 (Hair et al., 2010).

The correlation analysis of the observed variables in Table 3 reports means and standard deviation. As demonstrated (see Table 3), CIVT was positively related to EEXT ($r = 0.35, p < .01$), TINT ($r = 0.28, p < .01$), and negatively related to JSAT ($r = -0.18, p < .01$). EEXT was positively related to TINT ($r = 0.31, p < .01$) and negatively related to JSAT ($r = -0.29, p < .01$).

5.3. Tests of hypothesized model

The fit indices (see Fig. 2) demonstrates that the hypothesized model fits the data reasonably (CMIN = 397.822; DF = 137; CMIN/DF = 2.90; CFI = 0.93; IFI = 0.93; PNFI = 0.71; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.08). Based on the findings, the path coefficient from CIVT to EEXT is significant and positive ($\beta = 0.32, z = 5.13, p < .01$). Therefore, H1 is empirically supported. The findings (see Fig. 2) reveal that the path coefficient from CIVT to TINT is also significant and positive ($\beta = 0.16, z = 2.72, p < .01$). Thus, H2 is empirically supported. However, there is no empirical supported for H3, because the path coefficient from CIVT to JSAT is not significant ($\beta = -0.04, z = -0.72, p < .55, ns$). The



Model fit statistics: CMIN = 397.822; DF = 137; CMIN/df = 2.90; CFI = 0.93; IFI = 0.93; PNFI = 0.71; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.08

Fig. 2. Structural model estimates.

Model fit statistics: CMIN = 397.822; DF = 137; CMIN/df = 2.90; CFI = 0.93; IFI = 0.93; PNFI = 0.71; RMSEA = 0.07; SRMR = 0.08.

Notes: All path estimates are significant except the direct path from customer incivility to job satisfaction; ns: not significant; CMIN (Minimum discrepancy); DF (Degrees of freedom); CFI (Comparative fit index); IFI (Incremental fit index); PNFI (Parsimony normed fit index); RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation); SRMR (Standardized root mean square residual).

Table 4
Bootstrapping findings of the mediating effects of emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesized mediating relationships	Unstandardized indirect estimates	LLCI	ULCI	p <
Customer Incivility → Emotional exhaustion → turnover intentions (0.236 ^a × 0.330 ^b)	0.078	0.041	0.132	0.001
Customer Incivility → Emotional exhaustion → job satisfaction (0.236 ^a × -0.401 ^b)	-0.095	-0.162	-0.052	0.001

Notes: A bootstrapping method with 5000 sample size generated at 95% confidence interval (CI) was adopted to test the significance of the indirect effects. Gender and age were the control variables; LLCI = lower-level confidence interval; upper-level confidence interval.

findings (see Fig. 2) show that the path coefficients from EEXT to TINT is positive and significant ($\beta = 0.35, z = 5.39, p < .001$) and JSAT is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.36, z = -5.47, p < .001$). Therefore, H4 and H5 are empirically supported.

The findings (see Table 4) provide the mediating effects of EEXT. A bootstrapping method with 5000 sample-size, a bias-corrected percentile, and accelerated confidence interval was used to test the significance of indirect path, and bootstrapped confidence interval does not include zero (Hayes, 2013). As demonstrated in Table 4, EEXT partially mediates the effect of CIVT on TINT (indirect effect = 0.078, LLCI = 0.041, and ULCI = 0.132, $p < .001$) and does not include zero. Therefore, H6 is supported. EEXT fully mediates the effect of CIVT on JSAT (indirect effect = -0.095, LLCI = -0.162, and ULCI = -0.052, $p < .001$) and does not include zero. Therefore, H7 is also supported. The results explain 0.2% of the variance in CIVT, 11% in EEXT, 19% in TINT, and 16% in JSAT.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The study investigated the relationships between CIVT, EEXT, TINT and JSAT among customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria- a Sub-Saharan African nation. The COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) was used as the theoretical underpinning to examine the hypothesized relationships.

The findings of this study provide us the evidence of the effects of CIVT on the employees work outcomes in the Nigerian hospitality industry where lack of contemporary human resource practices is still a major challenge (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016).

Empirical evidence has demonstrated that CIVT heightens EEXT which consequently influence employees work outcomes (e.g. Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2014). Specifically, the findings show that the relationship between CIVT and EEXT is positive and significant. The findings corroborate previous findings obtained from a variety of industries, samples and regions (Diefendorff & Croyle, 2008; Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016; Wilson & Holmval, 2013). In other words, the sample of customer-contact hotel employees are not different from samples from a variety of industries, samples and regions in terms of their perceptions of and responses to stressors (i.e., customer incivility and emotional exhaustion). Our findings are consistent with the tenets of the COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989) that customer-contact employees experience EEXT when they perceive a threat of loss of resources or unable to gain returns of the resources already invested due to work-related stress. The study findings revealed that CIVT increased TINT among customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria. This demonstrates that CIVT is a critical antecedent of TINT in the service industry. Our result is comparable to other empirical research (Han et al., 2016; Li & Zhou, 2013). Surprisingly, the findings demonstrate that CIVT had no significant influence on JSAT. The potential reason may be due to the fact that (1) Nigerian hospitality industry is lacking the contemporary human resource practices and coupled with (2) an irregular work environment, job insecurity, poor remuneration, and long working hours (Adeyemi, Ojo, Aina, & Olanipekun, 2006). Such conditions may have already purged these employees of their satisfaction towards their work, and as such, encounters with unruly customers may have no significant effect on their work outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction). In other words, employees who are not satisfied with their job because of poor remuneration and lack of job security may exhibit a nonchalant attitude to work tasks, and therefore, care less regarding disrespectful customers.

Accordingly, our findings have further validated the previous empirical evidence (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016) that CIVT is not only a universal common phenomenon, but a different cultural context can indeed have a profound influence on how it is perpetrated by the customers, interpreted and managed by the customer-contact hotel employees and hotel management.

The findings also demonstrate that EEXT functioned as a partial mediator of the effects of CIVT on TINT and full mediator on JSAT. Contrary to our findings, evidence of a full mediating role of EEXT on the effect of CIVT on TINT was found in previous studies (Han et al., 2016; Li & Zhou, 2013). Customer-contact employees in hotel often experience EEXT due to uncivil customer behavior, and in turn exhibit TINT and high levels of job dissatisfaction. The findings that customer-contact employees become emotionally exhausted, increasingly unhappy, unable to focus on tasks and are dissatisfied with their job in response to frustrations from customer unpleasant behavior is relevant and consistent (Sliter et al., 2010). Irregular work environment, high unemployment rate, and non-existent welfare might also explain our findings. Therefore, our findings provide empirical support to the generalizability of theoretical framework of incivility globally.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study's findings contribute to the tourism and service management literature in few ways. Firstly, this research extends the empirical studies in the tourism and service management literature by developing and testing a model that examine the relationships between CIVT and EEXT and how EEXT mediates the impacts of CIVT on TINT and JSAT. The findings corroborate previous studies that CIVT is a global phenomenon (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016), the strongest factor (Cho et al., 2016), the main determinant (Leiter & Maslach, 2009), and the most powerful factor (Adams & Webster, 2013) that significantly influence EEXT. The characteristics of service industry require customer-contact employees to operate under the position that 'the customer is always right', creating a welcoming environment, faking emotions and appearing pleasant to provides exceptional services even in situations involving bad-mannered customers (Sliter et al., 2010), and that explains why they experience physical, psychological and emotional drain at work (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998).

Secondly, the data used for the current study was obtained from customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria. The nation is still relatively underrepresented in the tourism and service management literature (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017), and empirical evidence in the field of CIVT is significant and relevant. In other words, empirical evidence from customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria, a developing Sub-Saharan African country, contributes to the theoretical underpinning of the CIVT and employees' work-related outcomes (Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016; Sliter et al., 2010).

Finally, a new concept has been established pertaining the insignificant relationship between CIVT and JSAT among customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria, contrary to the findings reported in Hur, Kim, and Park's (2015) study. This confirmed a recent call that empirical evidence from different cross-cultural context may broadens theoretical underpinning of the effects of CIVT on work-related outcomes (Sliter et al., 2010).

6.2. Practical implications

This research offers a few practical implications for the management of service organizations. Although, workplace incivility is a low intensity and uncertain in nature, it is considered one of the most dreadful forms of misconduct of service employees that triggers negative work outcomes (Porath et al., 2015; Schilpzand, Pater, & Erez, 2016; Sliter et al., 2012). The management should pay attention, create awareness and classify CIVT as a problem. Such awareness will prepare the mind of customer-contact employees towards potential occurrence, eliminate the initial shock associated with unexpected events, and may minimize their emotional fatigue. It is important for the management to conduct research either through survey or interview to obtain information from customer-contact employees regarding how they interpret and handle CIVT and the aftermath feelings. The response will provide a clear understanding and the magnitude of the effects on organizations

effectiveness and employee well-being. A problem identified is half solved, and as such, the information may be used to develop response strategy to mitigate the effects of CIVT. Likewise, management of hotels should conduct a similar research to obtain information from customers on the likely factors and/or under what circumstances, they will behave rudely or display incivility behavior towards customer-contact hotel employees during the service delivery process. The outcomes of such research are likely to shed light on the actual causes of the incivility in the hotel industry. Furthermore, the findings will help the management towards developing appropriate strategies and providing adequate training that will enhance the skills of the contact-customer employees in providing exceptional services beyond the expectations of the customers.

Since Nigerian hotel industry is devoid of contemporary human resource practices, management should be proactive in developing and implementing appropriate training techniques such as knowledgeable-informed mechanism for the customer-contact employees, which may not only minimize the possibility of CIVT, but enhances their skills in providing exceptional service and handling procedures (Sliter et al., 2012). Supportive mechanism and continued training program should be developed to help the victims (employees) of CIVT manage the aftermath feelings of the effects (Hur et al., 2016). Considering the insignificant direct relationship between CIVT and JSAT, and the full mediating role of EEXT, management should implement organizational practices and policies to avail the victim (employees) of CIVT.

Being a country of rich ethnic diversity with different customs, dialects, and traditions (Olugbade, 2016), educating actual and potential customers through awareness campaigns on what behavior is expected of them might be a potential solution to eliminating CIVT. For instance, the management can educate customers through a variety of ways, including videos and/or billboards display in strategic places within the hotel.

6.3. Limitations and future research

Although we have provided a number of implications (e.g., theoretical and practical), yet there are few limitations. First, we used cross-sectional data gathered from customer-contact Nigerian hotel employees. The data collection appears to provide empirical supports for the causal relationships, however, using time-lagged designs would minimize the potential selection bias. In addition, using longitudinal data for future studies would be beneficial in making conclusions regarding the causality among the variables. Second, this current study focused on customer-contact hotel employees in Nigeria. However, obtaining data from employees in other service organizations such as restaurants, airlines, banks, and hospitals in the future research would be useful in making generalizations about the causality. Furthermore, using data from customer-contact service employees in neighboring Sub-Saharan African countries would also be useful in making generalizations about the causality.

Finally, since Nigeria is characterized as a rich ethnic diversity with different customs, languages, and traditions (Olugbade, 2016), future research linking trait competitiveness, customer orientation and cultural differences to work outcomes can make a significant contribution to the CIVT literature (Sliter et al., 2012).

Appendices. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2018.10.004>.

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