Who Will Take Responsibility for God's Mistakes: Research on the Influence of Customer Incivility on Employee Engagement in B2B Context

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Abstract

Previous researches on consumer incivility mainly focused on B2C (Business to Customers) context to explore the influence of individual customer incivility on employees' work behaviors. However, another typical scenario, that is, B2B (Business to Business) context was ignored. To fill this research gap, based on the resource conservation theory and social identity theory, a mediated moderation model was constructed to explore how enterprise-level consumer incivility affects employees' work behavior. By analyzing 199 valid data collected at two-time points, the results show that: (1) Enterprise-level customer incivility negatively affects employee engagement; (2) Emotional exhaustion plays a completely mediating role in the relationship between enterprise-level customer incivility and employee engagement; (3) Organizational identity plays a positive moderating role in the relationship between enterprise-level customer incivility and emotional exhaustion. (4) Organizational identity positively moderates the mediating role of emotional exhaustion between enterprise-level customer incivility and employee engagement.

Keywords

Customer Incivility; Emotional Exhaustion; Organizational Identity; Engagement.

1. Introduction

A significant feature of the service industry is the frequent interaction between staff and consumers which can be divided into individual-level customers and enterprise-level customers. In recent years, the media have observed, investigated and disclosed more and more uncivilized behaviors of customers to employees in the service industry, such as customers making noise and damage in consumption places, and physically or verbally abusing service personnel [1], which is also known as customer incivility. According to the survey of *UA Zensen*, an industry trade union, 73.8 percent of 30,396 service workers in Japan said they had experienced rude behavior from customers, including violent language, threats and repeated complaints [2]. In fact, in the service industry, corporate account managers also often encounter misconduct of enterprise-level customers. In an interview with a senior telecom corporate account manager in Hangzhou, China, it was found that different from serving individual-level customers, their service process and procedures were more complicated, which was more likely to lead to negative comments, complaints and other improper behaviors of customers. In addition, enterprise-level customers transact on behalf of their own company, hence, they may have stronger organizational support. Therefore, they would be less afraid of treating employees with improper behaviors. Besides the telecommunications service industry, employees who are responsible for corporate business in banks, chemical enterprises also get trapped in such a situation. Therefore, customer incivility in the service industry is by no means uncommon and should be taken seriously by the public.

However, influenced by the traditional marketing concept of "customer is always right", many service enterprises require employees to smile after suffering misbehavior, control their emotions and behaviors, and avoid direct conflicts with customers, so as to prevent customer loss and cause adverse effects on organizational performance. In fact, this requirement will have varying degrees of negative effects on employees' emotional health, work enthusiasm and the organization itself [3]. According to the statistical results of *People.cn*, more than 90 percent of service employees in China suffered from such customer misconduct but failed to vent in time, resulting in psychological depression, physical and mental exhaustion and other emotional problems. Therefore, the negative impact of customer incivility in the service industry should not be underestimated and is worth further study.

There were a few extant studies exploring the impact of individual-level customer incivility on diverse dimensions, including its impact on employees, fellow customers, and organizations. When discussing its impact on the employee dimension, Grandey et al. studied the effects of customer verbal aggression, a specific form of customer incivility, on employee stress assessment and emotional exhaustion [4]. It was concluded that the frequency of verbal aggression was positively related to employee's emotional exhaustion [4]. However, existing researches mostly explore the impact of customer misconduct on employees' emotional level, such as emotional exhaustion, without further exploring its negative impact on employee behavior. Moreover, there has been little research comparing the impact of enterprise-level consumer incivility in B2B scenarios with individual-level consumer incivility in B2C scenarios on employee behavior respectively.

The existing researches mainly focus on incivility within the organization, such as incivility among coworkers, superiors and subordinates, etc. [5], while the researches on the influence of incivility outside the organization, such as customer incivility, especially in the B2B context, are few. Grandey et al. pointed out that customer incivility, as a kind of out-of-organization misconduct, would have a negative impact on employee attendance and emotional state [4]. However, relevant researches do not reveal the further negative effects of enterprise-level customer incivility on organizations, and the mechanism of it is unclear.

According to the social identity theory, employees with high organizational identification tend to think, judge, and give feedback not only from the perspective of individual themselves, but also from their own organization [6]. Therefore, this study speculated that such employees may experience dual emotional resource depletion and suffer more severe emotional exhaustion when confronted with customer incivility, resulting in lower job engagement.

According to the 199 data collected from front-line employees serving enterprise-level users in B2B context, this paper attempts to explore the impact of enterprise-level customer incivility (CI) on employee engagement (WE). Also, this paper will verify the mediating role of emotional exhaustion (EE), and the moderating role of organizational identity (OI) based on the resource conservation theory and social identity theory.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1. Customer Incivility and Employees' Work Engagement

Sharma & Mishra defined workplace incivility as low-intensity deviant behavior, which has vague intentions but achieves adverse consequences of harming the target group and violates the norms requiring mutual respect in the workplace [7]. In the early years, the research on workplace incivility mainly focused on the deviant behaviors between colleagues or superiors and subordinates. However, in the service industry, the deviant behaviors between customers and employees tend to be more frequent and serious than the deviant behaviors between colleagues or superiors and subordinates. With the development of the service industry and the progress of organizational behavior research, some scholars began to study the negative impact

of improper behavior between customers and employees. Customer misconduct is a specific manifestation of workplace misconduct, that is, a customer's deviant behavior violates the norms of mutual respect between the customer and the employee. The customer misbehavior in B2B scenario discussed in this paper refers to the misbehavior of enterprise-level customers towards employees [8]. Its specific manifestations include that customers treat employees in disrespectful, belittling, unreasonable or aggressive ways, such as verbal insults, unreasonable demands and interruptions [9].

Employee engagement is defined as a positive, fulfilling and work-related state of mind. It has three main characteristics: vitality, dedication and focus [10]. Existing studies believe that engagement is a result of employees having or obtaining high level of resources [11]. Such resources include work resources, such as organizational support and positive feedback, as well as personal resources, such as self-efficacy and emotional resources [12]. Customer misconduct is a kind of negative feedback from customers to employees' service, which will hinder employees' initiative and enthusiasm in the workplace, exert negative psychological impact on employees, consume emotional resources, and ultimately negatively affect employees' engagement.

According to the resource conservation theory, individuals strive to acquire, maintain, cultivate and protect valuable resources, which usually have internal and external incentive effects. When individuals lose these resources, the incentive effect will be reduced and individuals will lose motivation [13]. In addition, according to the loss priority principle of resource conservation theory, when individual resources are lost, the impact degree and time are much greater than that of resource acquisition. In the service industry, good service attitude and working state of employees need positive feedback and emotional resources as the basis. When customers conduct inappropriate behaviors towards employees, employees' services are not recognized, and employees consume a lot of emotional resources to deal with such inappropriate behaviors. Therefore, employees fall into the dilemma of resource loss, valuable resources are not protected, and work enthusiasm and engagement are reduced. Based on the above discussion, this paper proposes the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Customer incivility is negatively related to employee engagement.

2.2. The Mediating Role of Emotional Exhaustion

As one type of individual resources, emotional resources are called emotional exhaustion when they are exhausted or overinflated [14]. Past studies have shown that employees in the service industry frequently deal with customers and pay a lot of emotional labor, such as serving customers with smiles all the time and obeying the principle of "customer is always right". When employees encounter customer incivility, they are required to use organizational norms to discipline themselves, resulting in a significant difference between their internal feelings and external expressions [15]. This difference would make employees feel the pressure from work, and they might suffer from low self-esteem, depression, nervousness and grumpiness [16]. Therefore, employees' emotional resources are consumed in large quantities, leading to emotional exhaustion [4].

Based on resource conservation theory, individuals would try their best to acquire, preserve and maintain their own valuable resources. In the state of stress, when the valuable resources of an individual are reduced or completely lost, the individual would get tired and the other resources that can be invested would also be relatively reduced [4]. In the workplace, when encountering customer incivility, employees would think that the customer, an important resource, is being lost. Then, they would feel unprecedented pressure and their emotional resources would be depleted, resulting in emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion finally leads to a reduction in other kinds of resources available to employees, resulting in job burnout. At this point, employees' attitudes towards customers and the organization would change,

leading to a decrease in work engagement and performance, which would eventually lead to a negative impact [17]. Based on the above arguments, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between customer incivility and work engagement.

2.3.   The Moderating Role of Organizational Identification

Organizational identification which refers to individuals' cognition of organizational identity or belonging [18], reflects the consistency of individual and organizational values. Organizational identification is rooted in the framework of the social identification theory, which divides identity into personal identity and social identity. Personal identity includes idiosyncrasy and ability, while social identity includes obvious group classifications such as nationality and affiliation. Hence, organizational identification is a special form of social identity [19]. With high organizational identification, individuals perceive organizational characteristics as parts of their self-concept [20]. In addition, higher organizational identification impels individuals to pursue group goals rather than individual goals [21].

Tarakci et al. suggest that individuals with high organizational identification are more likely to respond from the perspective of organizations rather than individuals comparing with those with low organizational identification [21]. In other words, employees with high organizational identification would respond more strongly when they receive negative feedback to their companies from the outside world. Specifically, when employees with high organizational identification encounter customer incivility, they would think that this misbehavior is not only aimed at themselves, but also at their organizations, which leads to dual emotional exhaustion. Hence, they tend to react from the perspective of the organization rather than the individual. Based on the above discussion, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Organizational identification positively moderates the relationship between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion, that is, the higher the employee's organizational identification, the stronger the positive relationship between customer incivility and employee emotional exhaustion.

Employees with high organizational identification believe that organization is an important part of self-concept, and they are more vulnerable to negative feedback to their organizations from outside the world, which then might have a negative impact on their emotional state, further affecting their own behavior in the organization. In particular, employees with high organizational identification would perceive that their personal interests as well as the interests of their organizations are harmed and generate a lot of negative emotions when encountering customer incivility. In the process of self-recovery, a large number of emotional resources would be consumed, which reduces the resources that could be put into work. On the contrary, employees with low organizational identification believe that individuals are far away from the organizations they belong to. In other words, they are not easy to associate themselves with the organizations or they do not care about the negative feedback from the customers to their organizations. Therefore, when they encounter customer incivility, they suffer lower emotional exhaustion and the reduction in work engagement. Consequently, this paper proposes the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Organizational identification positively moderates the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between customer incivility and work engagement, that is, the higher the organizational identification, the stronger the mediating effect.

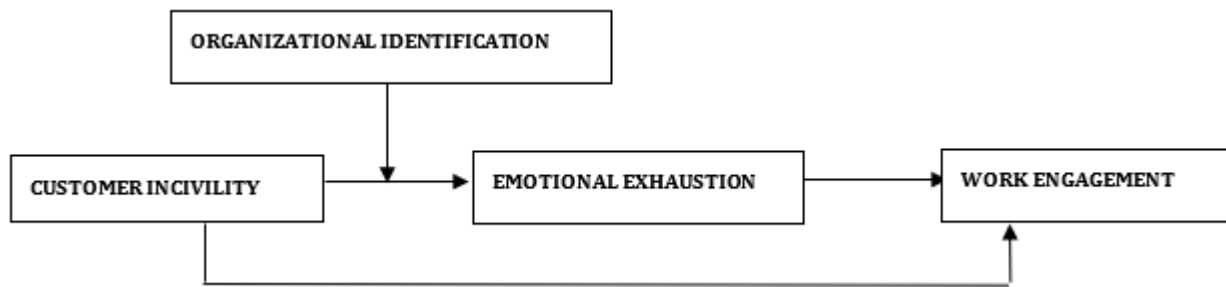To sum up, the conceptual model of this paper is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

3. Method

3.1. Sample and Procedure

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

Demographic variables	Percentage
Gender	
Male	79.9%
Female	20.1%
Age	
30 or below	22.6%
31~40	43.2%
41~50	24.7%
50 or above	9.5%
Education level	
Junior high school or below	13.1%
Senior high school	26.1%
Junior college	28.6%
Undergraduate	28.7%
Postgraduate or above	3.5%
Team working years	
Less than 5 years	74.4%
6~10 years	21.1%
11~15 years	3.0%
More than 16 years	1.5%
Work experience	
Less than 10 years	55.3%
11~20 years	31.7%
21~30 years	8.0%
31~40 years	4.5%
More than 40 years	0.5%
Working time with the current supervisor	
Less than 3 years	64.3%
4~6 years	21.6%
7~9 years	7.6%
More than 10 years	6.5%

Data in this research was collected via questionnaires which were distributed to employees and managers of 4 chemical product and service companies in Shanghai, Beijing, Chongqing and Qingdao in China. It was worth noting that the business model of the selected companies was B2B, that is, both the supply and demand sides of the transaction represented their enterprises, so it could be ensured that the data collected in this study was enterprise-level customer incivility rather than individual-level customer incivility. In order to avoid common method biases, this study collected data in two-time points. Specifically speaking, in Time 1, besides control variables, employees were asked to rate the level of customer incivility and organizational identification. Four weeks later, employees ranked their emotional exhaustion and their leaders were asked to report employees' work engagement.

After matching the two-time points questionnaires, there was 199 valid data collected. The demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows:

3.2. Measurement

All variables were measured using scales from English literature. In scale translation, this study adopted double-blind translation procedure and made some adjustment according to the specific context. In our study, respondents rated these measurements based on the 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.2.1. Customer Incivility (Time 1)

The scale measuring customer incivility was derived from the research of Cortina et al. [22] Seven items were included, such as "Customers often say unkind words to me". The Cronhach's alpha of this variable was 0.905.

3.2.2. Organizational Identification (Time 1)

The organizational identity scale used in this study was adapted from the research of Mael & Tetrick [20]. The scenarios related to school in the scale were adjusted into organizational scenarios. The adapted scale consisted of 6 items, with typical item like "the success of the organization is my success". The Cronhach's alpha was 0.823.

3.2.3. Emotional Exhaustion (Time 2)

The emotional exhaustion scale used in this study was obtained from Schaufeli et al. 's research [23]. It included 5 items in total, for example, "work makes me feel mentally exhausted". The Cronhach's alpha was 0.869.

3.2.4. Work Engagement (Time 2)

The work engagement scale used in this study was from the research of Seppl et al., including 9 items in total [24]. This scale involved three dimensions, which were vitality, dedication and concentration. Typical items included "I feel full of energy at work". The Cronhach's alpha was 0.918.

Based on previous literature, age, gender, education level, team working years and work experience might have an influence on employees' work engagement. Hence, these variables were selected as control variables in this study.

4. Results

4.1. Reliability and Validity Analysis

Before testing the hypotheses, SPSS 24.0 was used to test the reliability of the used scales. The results showed that the Cronbach's alpha value of these four variables was all higher than 0.8, indicating that all the scales were reliable. Next, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted via AMOS 26.0 to test the validity of the model. The results in Table 2 indicated that

compared with other models, the fitting validity of the four-factor model was the best ($\chi2/df$ = 2.625, RMSEA = 0.091, CFI=0.92, NNFI=0.91).

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Model	Factor	$\chi2$	df	$\chi2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	NNFI
Four-factor model	CI, OI, EE, WE	834.79	318	2.625	0.091	0.92	0.91
Three-factor model	CI+OI, EE, WE	798.92	319	2.504	0.087	0.93	0.93
Two-factor model	CI+OI+EE, WE	793.92	319	2.489	0.087	0.93	0.93

Notes: CI: Customer incivility; OI: Organization identification; EE: Emotional exhaustion; WE: Work engagement.

4.2. Descriptive Statistics

The mean value, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of each variable are shown in Table 3. As can be seen from Table 3, there is a significant positive correlation between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.407$, $p < 0.01$), and a significant negative correlation between customer incivility and work engagement ($r = -0.141$, $p < 0.05$). Emotional exhaustion is negatively correlated with work engagement ($r = -0.252$, $p < 0.01$). Correlation analysis preliminarily explains the relationship between variables and provides a basis for hypotheses testing.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

	MEAN	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.Gender	0.799	0.402	1									
2.Age	2.211	0.902	0.187**	1								
3.Education level	2.834	1.091	-0.342**	-0.401**	1							
4.Team working years	1.317	0.607	0.055	0.209**	0.202**	1						
5.Work experience	1.633	0.854	0.137	0.580**	-0.245**	0.186**	1					
6.Working years with the current supervisor	1.563	0.890	0.078	0.097	0.154*	0.659**	0.193**	1				
7.CI	1.895	0.784	0.253**	0.098	-0.190**	0.083	0.100	0.020	1			
8.OI	3.874	0.686	0.051	0.042	0.145*	0.034	-0.019	-0.043	-0.625**	1		
9.EE	2.428	0.865	0.077	0.057	-0.028	0.075	-0.093	0.059	0.407**	-0.174*	1	
10.WE	3.834	0.626	0.047	0.105	-0.024	-0.045	0.039	-0.104	-0.141*	0.553**	-0.252**	1

Notes: N=199, ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, CI: Customer incivility; OI: Organization identification; EE: Emotional exhaustion; WE: Work engagement.

4.3. Hypotheses Testing

In this study, the main effect, mediation effect, moderation effect and moderated mediation effect of the model were tested via the Bootstrapping function of PROCESS developed by Hayes & Preacher [25].

4.3.1. The Main Effect and Mediation Effect

The test results of main effect and mediation effect of the model which are displayed in Table 4 show that all the regression paths are significant. First, customer incivility is significantly negative related to work engagement ($r = -0.166$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported. Secondly, the mediation effect of emotional exhaustion is significant ($r = -0.240$, $p < 0.01$). Thus, hypothesis 2 is supported. Meanwhile, after adding the mediator into the model, the direct effect of customer incivility on work engagement is no longer significant ($r = -0.064$, $p > 0.05$), indicating that it is a complete mediation role of emotional exhaustion.

Table 4. Regression Results

Variables	WE		
	M1	M2	M3
Intercept			
Gender	0.056(0.731)	0.090(1.162)	0.085(1.124)
Age	0.141(1.477)	0.132(1.392)	0.172(1.837)
Education level	0.071(0.816)	0.046(0.530)	0.057(0.674)
Team working years	-0.007(-0.074)	0.019(0.188)	0.015(0.154)
Work experience	-0.008(-0.091)	0.001(0.013)	-0.054(-0.619)
Working years with the current supervisor	-0.126(-1.316)	-0.140(-1.468)	-0.120(-1.282)
Independent variable			
CI		-0.166(-2.254)*	-0.064(-0.804)
Mediator			
EE			-0.240(-3.101)**
F-statistic	0.954	1.561	2.630
Adjusted R-squared	-0.001	0.019	0.062
p-value	0.458	0.000	0.009

Notes: N=199, ***$p<0.001$, **$p<0.01$, *$p<0.05$, CI: Customer incivility; EE: Emotional exhaustion; WE: Work engagement.

4.3.2. The Moderation Effect

The test results of moderation effect of organizational identification which are displayed in Table 5 show that the interaction item of customer incivility and organizational identification is significantly positive related to emotional exhaustion (= 0.228, $p < 0.05$), and the 95% confidence interval does not include 0. Thus, hypothesis 3 is supported. The moderation effect diagram is shown in Figure 2, that is, the higher the organizational identification is, the stronger the positive relationship between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion is.

Table 5. The Moderation Effect Diagram

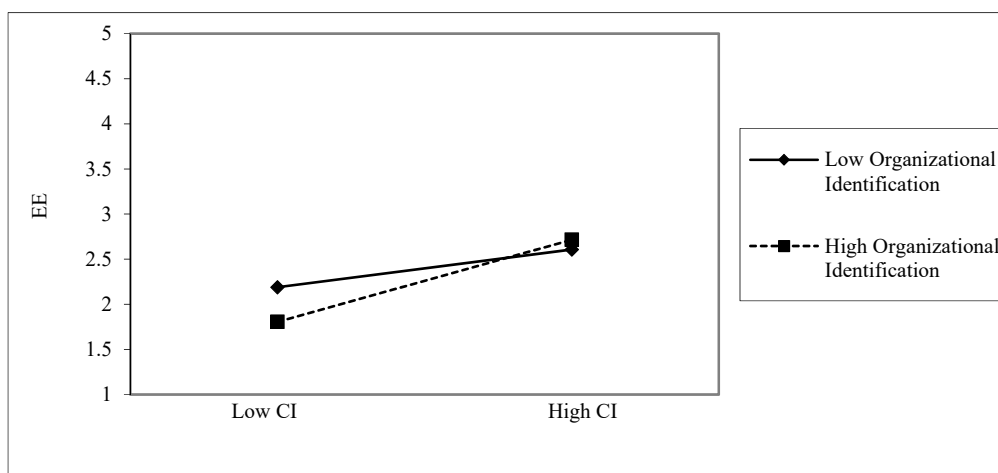| Assumed Regression Path	Effect	SD	95% Confidence Interval
CI×OI→EE	0.228	0.106	[0.0181, 04376]

Figure 2. The Moderation Effect

Notes: CI: Customer incivility; EE: Emotional exhaustion.

4.3.3. The Moderated Mediation Effect

The test results of moderated mediation effect of the model which are displayed in Table 6 show that when organizational identification is lower than a standard deviation, the mediation effect

value of emotional exhaustion is -0.046, and the 95% confidence interval is [-0.1321, -0.0064], excluding 0. When the mean value of organizational identification does not change, the mediation effect value of emotional exhaustion is -0.074, and the 95% confidence interval is [-0.1635, -0.0.0284], excluding 0. Meanwhile, when organizational identification is higher than a standard deviation, the mediation effect value of emotional exhaustion is -0.101, and the 95% confidence interval is [-0.2042, -0.0.0346], excluding 0. Therefore, the mediation effect is significant at different levels of moderators. Furthermore, it could be seen from the indirect effect value that the mediation effect of the model increases with the increase of organizational identification, hence, it is a positive moderator of organizational identification.

Table 6. The Moderated Mediation Effect

OI	Indirect Effect	SD	95% Confidence Interval
3.188	-0.046	0.0281	[-0.1321, -0.0064]
3.874	-0.074	0.0311	[-0.1635, -0.0284]
4.560	-0.101	0.0426	[-0.2042, -0.0346]

Notes: OI: Organization identification.

5. Discussion

The empirical results show that the research hypothesis of the relationship between customer incivility and work engagement has been verified. The mediating effect of emotional exhaustion and the moderating effect of organizational identification have also been verified. The conclusions are as follows:

(1) Customer incivility has a significant negative impact on work engagement. The higher the employee encounters customer incivility, the more likely it is to have a negative impact on the reduction of work engagement, which indicates that customer incivility is an important factor to induce employee burnout behavior.

(2) Emotional exhaustion plays a mediating role in the relationship between customer incivility and employee work engagement. This result indicates that employees' emotional exhaustion is caused by the continuous depletion of emotional resources when they encounter customer incivility, which tends to reduce their engagement in work.

(3) Organizational identification positively moderates the effect of customer incivility on emotional exhaustion, and positively moderates the mediating effect of emotional exhaustion between customer incivility and work engagement, that is, the higher the organizational identification, the stronger the mediating effect. When employees encounter customer incivility, their strong emotional attachment to the organization leads them to believe that customer incivility is not only a personal violation, but also a kind of misbehavior to their own organization. That is, employees with high organizational identification are twice as likely to lose emotional resources as employees with low organizational identification when they encounter customer incivility. Therefore, organizational identification positively moderates the relationship between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion.

6. Implications

6.1. Theoretical Implications

Firstly, the results of our research reveal the effects of customer incivility on employees as well as its spillover effect. Existing research on customer incivility indicates that customer incivility would have a negative impact on the experience of customers themselves and fellow customers, while ignoring its impact on employees and organizations. Based on resource conservation theory and social identification theory, this paper reveals that customer incivility would also

have a negative impact on employees' emotional resources, which leads to a decline in the supply of employees' emotional resources at work and a decrease in their work engagement. Ultimately, customer incivility would have a negative impact on organizational performance.

Furthermore, the results of this paper expand the boundaries of the impact of conflict behaviors on employees and organizations. Previous literatures generally study the influence mechanism of intra-organizational conflict on employees and organizations, such as inter-employee conflict, superior and subordinate conflict, ignoring the harm of extra-organizational conflict behavior. This paper studies the negative effects of customer incivility, which is one kind of extra-organizational conflict behavior, on employees and organizations. Therefore, this paper expands the boundaries of different types of conflict behaviors on employees and organizations.

Finally, this paper explains the positive moderating effect of organizational identification on the relationship between customer incivility and emotional exhaustion. Organizational identification refers to the degree to which employees recognize the values of the organization they belong to and reflects their sense of belonging to the organization. In the B2B business model, organizational identification is particularly important because employees conduct transactions with customers on behalf of the company. When faced with external feedback, employees with high organizational identification are more likely to respond from the perspective of the organization rather than the individual. Therefore, when employees with high organizational identification encounter customer incivility, they tend to believe that this customer incivility is not only aimed at themselves, but also at the organization. Thus, customer incivility causes double emotional exhaustion of employees. This explanation deepens our cognition of how organizational identification positively moderates the influence of customer incivility on emotional exhaustion.

6.2. Practical Implications

In addition to the above three theoretical contributions, this paper also has some implications for practice. Firstly, enterprises should recognize the universality and harmfulness of customer incivility and develop relevant courses for staff training. Service enterprises could set up a complete set of special training for the situation where employees encounter customer incivility. In this way, the soft and hard skills of employees in dealing with customer incivility in a reasonable way could be improved. Moreover, the negative impact of customer incivility on employees' emotional resources, work engagement and organizational performance could be reduced.

Secondly, enterprises should re-examine the concept of "customers are always right" and pay attention to the mental health of employees. Enterprises need to focus on the emotional changes of employees especially when they encounter customer incivility. Besides, enterprises should timely guide employees to restore their emotional state, so as to help employees continue to actively participate in the work.

Finally, enterprises should especially focus on employees with high organizational identification. Employees with high organizational identification usually have a greater sense of belonging to the organization and are willing to devote more energy into the organization, thus generating more benefits for the organization. However, such employees are more vulnerable to customer incivility. For example, they might feel emotion exhausted and reduce work engagement. Therefore, enterprises should focus on such employees, and guide them to give up the idea that "attacking me is attacking my organization" when they encounter customer incivility. Furthermore, enterprises should help these employees adjust their mentality timely in order to create more value for the organization.

7. Research Limitations and Future Prospects

This study inevitably has some limitations. Firstly, to further avoid common method biases, future studies could collect data at three-time points, that is, the independent variable "customer incivility" and the moderating variable "organizational identification" at time 1, the mediating variable "emotional exhaustion" at time 2 and the dependent variable "work engagement" at time 3. Secondly, our moderating variable "organizational identification" is an internal factor which is not easily changed. Future studies could explore how external factors, such as training and organizational culture would affect the influencing mechanism of customer incivility on service employees.

Acknowledgments

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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