

The Dual Mediating Effects of Self-esteem and Hope in the Relationship between Boss's Incivility and Life Satisfaction

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: The purpose of this study was to examine the double mediation effects of self-esteem and hope on how a boss's incivility affects life satisfaction in 339 Korean workers.

Method/Statistical Analysis: SPSS Win. 25.0 and PROCESS macro for SPSS version 3.4 were used for descriptive statistics analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and double mediation effect analysis.

Findings: First, Pearson correlation analysis showed statistically significant correlations between a boss's incivility, life satisfaction, self-esteem and hope. Second, PROCESS macro analysis showed that a boss's incivility negatively affected self-esteem and life satisfaction, self-esteem positively influenced hope and satisfaction with life, and hope positively influenced the satisfaction with life. Third, in the relationship between a boss's incivility and life satisfaction, self-esteem and hope were double-mediators.

Improvements/Applications: This result is expected to contribute to the formation of a new workplace culture in Korea as a new model in which self-esteem and hope mediate how a boss's incivility affects life satisfaction.

Keywords: *Boss's Incivility, Life Satisfaction, Self-esteem, Hope, Mediation effect, PROCESS macro.*

Introduction

Many companies around the world are concentrating on creating a good corporate culture in order to create a "workable workplace." Since the workplace is where hierarchies exist, it is necessary to form a smooth relationship between the supervisor and the subordinates in order to form a proper organizational culture, and the core of the relationship is 'incivility'. Nevertheless, research on this is not active in Korea,

perhaps because, even if the boss speaks unfairly in the organization, employees are allowed to implicitly avoid the response and are reluctant to expose it to the outside world^[1]. Incivility is a violation of mutually respectful norms, a weak robbery with no clear intention to harm others^[2]. Examples of incivility include criticizing others, spreading negative stories about others, checking on or e-mailing during meeting times, and publicly disparaging others. That is, incivility is a different concept from deviations, such as abuse, aggression, bullying, and mobbing. Already in 2010, the World Health Organization^[3] raised the severity of incivility-related issues in most organizations around the world, especially the physical and mental problems caused by incivility in the workplace.

Incivility in the workplace is important because incivility may seem seemingly mild, but it causes severe stress on the victim^[4] and harms the physical

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and psychological health of the individual, because it tends to spread quickly within organizations as if it were transmitted^[2]. This is called the organizational incivility spiral, and victims of incivility develop negative emotions, revenge, and aggression, which sometimes leads to intense violence and aggressive behavior beyond incivility^[2]. In particular, contact with the boss is avoided in the course of performing the job, and the boss is the most influential person in the workplace ^[5]. Since the findings suggest that incivility offenders are three times more likely to be in a higher position than victims^[6], it is worth paying attention to superior's incivility.

Office workers' incivility is closely related to life satisfaction, and workplace incivility decreases employee satisfaction with life^[7], and the incivility and psychological well-being are negatively interrelated^[8]. Life satisfaction is a very subjective value judgment and the feeling of fullness in daily life^[9] and is defined as the satisfaction and dissatisfaction with life, happiness, unhappiness, and feelings of individual well-being^[10].

The variables expected to pass through the incivility and life satisfaction paths of the superior are self-esteem and hope. Self-esteem is related to a positive or negative evaluation of one's own self and to the degree of respect for oneself^[11]. Self-esteem has been proven numerous times to be a powerful variable influencing life satisfaction^[12-14]. People with high self-esteem are satisfied with themselves, because they see themselves as valuable and capable, whereas those with low self-esteem are not satisfied with themselves because they are valued and incapable. In particular, workers with high self-esteem had positive feelings about their jobs^[15] and had higher job satisfaction than did those who did not^[16]. The incivility of the boss is based on the subjective judgment that the victim feels. Therefore, the self-esteem of office workers is thought to mediate between the incivility and life satisfaction of supervisors.

Hope, on the other hand, is a positive characteristic that contributes to an individual's setting and pursuing goals^[17], an agency thinking that leads to motivation and pathways thinking that leads to the perception of the ability to create a variety of pathways to achieve that goal^[18]. People with high hopes are less depressed, more active, and more confident and challenging to achieve their goals^[19]. In addition, even if they face difficulties, they focus on achieving their goals and synchronize themselves, which lowers their negative emotions and

increases their life satisfaction^[20]. In Korea, there was a positive correlation between hope and life satisfaction^[21], and among the predictors of happiness, self-esteem had the highest relative influence, followed by hope^[22]. It was demonstrated that hope is closely related to life satisfaction.

There are some accumulated studies that analyze indirect effects using self-esteem and hope as mediators. Specifically, self-esteem had a mediation effect on the relationship between stress and adaptation to school life^[23], and between parental abuse and school violence^[24]. Hope also mediated the relationship between job stress and happiness^[25], between efficacy and adaptation of migrant women^[26], and between parenting stress and child happiness^[27].

Therefore, this study aimed to examine the dual mediation effects of self-esteem and hope on the effect of a boss's incivility on life satisfaction, and to provide a new model for improving the satisfaction with life for employees.

Method for Research

- 1. Model for Research:** This study used model 6, a serial mediating-effect analysis method of PROCESS macro ver. 3.4. The research model was set based on previous studies is shown in [Figure 1].

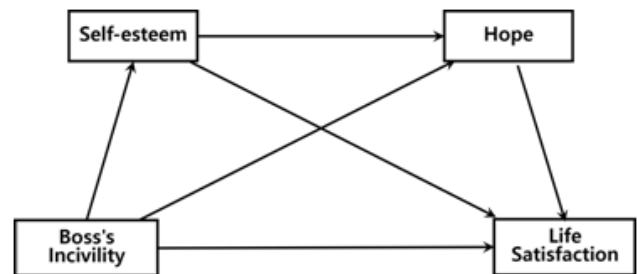


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

- 2. Survey subject and data collection method:** The subjects were 339 people in D city in Chungcheongnam-do. The subjects were 173 women (51.0%) and 166 men (49.0%). The ages were 45 (13.3%) in their 20s, 128 (37.8%) in their 30s, and 166 (49.0%) in their 40s or older.
- 3. Research tools**
 - (a) Boss's Incivility:** The incivility of the superiors was measured by modifying and supplementing some items in the organization-incivility scale of Cortina et al.^[28]. This measure is a total of

five questions, and each item was converted to a 5-point Likert scale, and the higher the score, the more the incivility of the boss was experienced. In this study, the superior-incivility reliability of Cronbach’s α was .907.

- (b) **Self-esteem:** Self-esteem measurements were taken from Rosenberg^[29]. This scale consists of a total of 10 questions and a 5-point Likert scale. The higher the score, the higher the level of respect for self. In this study, the reliability level for self-esteem was Cronbach’s α of .826.
- (c) **Hope:** Hope was measured by the scale of Snyder et al.^[30] revised and validated for Korea by Choi et al.^[31]. This scale is composed of four agency thinking and four pathways thinking. In this study, the reliability of the hope Cronbach’s α was .889.
- (d) **Life satisfaction:** Life satisfaction was measured using three items of life satisfaction among the short-term happiness scale (COMOSWB) developed and validated by Seo and Koo^[32]. Each item measures the satisfaction with life in personal, relational, and group aspects. It uses a 7-point Likert scale. The higher the score, the higher the satisfaction with life. In this study, Cronbach’s α was .874.

4. **Data Analysis:** SPSS PC + Win. 25.0 and SPSS PROCESS macro 3.4 were used to analysis descriptive statistics, frequency analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and mediation effect analysis.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Correlation and Descriptive Statistics

	Boss’s Incivility	Life Satisfaction	Self-esteem	Hope
Boss’s Incivility	1			
Life Satisfaction	-.323**	1		
Self-esteem	-.291**	.466**	1	
Hope	-.212**	.498**	.683**	1
M	2.353	4.184	3.597	3.545
SD	1.066	0.867	0.498	0.540

**p < .01

1. **Correlation and descriptive statistics:** We used Pearson’s analysis to find the correlations between variables. The result is shown in [Table 1]. There was a statistically significant correlation between each pair of variables. There was a statistically significant relationship between life satisfaction, self-esteem, and hope, but a negative relationship with superior incivility. The mean of self-esteem, hope, and life satisfaction (7-point scale) exceeded the middle score, but the incivility mean of the boss was less than the middle value.

2. Model Verification:

Verification of multiple mediation effects: In order to verify the dual mediation effects of self-esteem and hope between boss’s incivility and life satisfaction experienced by office workers, we analyzed the model number 6 of the PROCESS macro for SPSS. We used bootstrapping to verify the mediation effects. We set up 5,000 samples and set the confidence interval to 95%. The analysis results are shown in [Figure 2] and [Table 2].

First, the incivility of the superiors in the mediating model had a negatively significant effect on self-esteem ($\beta = -.1361, p < .001$), but not the hope ($\beta = -.0073, p > .05$). Self-esteem had a significant positive effect on hope ($\beta = .7366, p < .001$). In other words, experiencing the boss’s incivility in the workplace not only negatively affects the worker’s self-esteem, but also lowers the hope by the lower self-esteem.

Second, the incivility of superiors in the dependent-variable model had a statistically significant negative effect on life satisfaction ($\beta = -.1626, p < .001$), but self-esteem ($\beta = .3144, p < .01$) and hope ($\beta = .5328, p < .001$) had a significant positive effect on life satisfaction. This suggests that incivility in organizations decreases employees’ satisfaction with life^[7] and has a negative relationship between incivility and psychological well-being^[8].

Third, the total effect of the path between the boss’s incivility and life satisfaction was $\beta = -.2627 (p < .001)$, but when the parameters were introduced, the direct effect of the path between the boss’s incivility and life satisfaction decreased to $\beta = -.1626 (p < .001)$; therefore, self-esteem and hope double mediated the relationship between superior incivility and life satisfaction.

Fourth, the magnitude of the overall indirect effect was -.1001 in the relationship between supervisor’s

incivility and life satisfaction, which was significant. In addition, M1 was -.0428, and there was no '0' in the 95.0% confidence interval. M2 was -.0039 with '0' in 95% confidence interval, so there was no mediation effect. As a result of verifying the size of the dual mediation effect, M1 & M2 is -.0534, and there is no value of '0' in 95% confidence interval. Therefore, the dual mediation effects were verified.

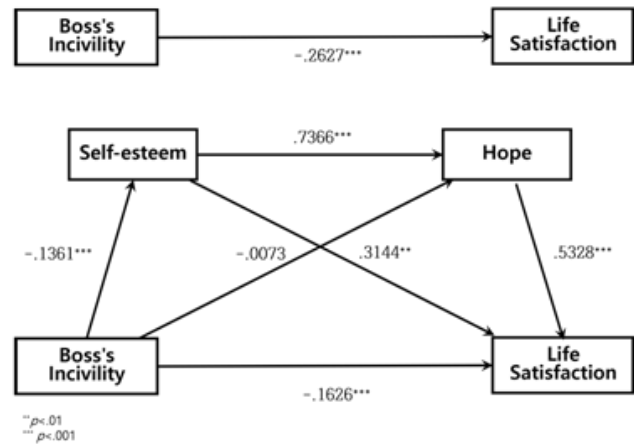


Figure 2. Effect size for each path

Table 2. Analysis of the dual mediation effects of self-esteem and hope on the relationship between supervisor's incivility and life satisfaction

Mediating variable model 1 (DV: Self-esteem)						
Variables	β	SE	t value	p	LLCI*	ULCI**
Constant	3.9174	.0629	62.2379	.0000	3.7936	4.0412
Boss's Incivility	-.1361	.0244	-5.5851	.0000	-.1840	-.0882
Mediating variable model 2 (DV: Hope)						
Variables	β	SE	t value	p	LLCI*	ULCI**
Constant	.9124	.1844	4.9493	.0000	.5498	1.2751
Boss's Incivility	-.0073	.0211	-.3471	.7287	-.0488	.0342
Self-esteem	.7366	.0451	16.3177	.0000	.6478	.8253
Dependent variable model (DV: Life satisfaction)						
Variables	β	SE	t value	p	LLCI*	ULCI**
Constant	1.5474	.3478	4.4489	.0000	.8632	2.2316
Boss's Incivility	-.1626	.0385	-4.2286	.0000	-.2382	-.0870
Self-esteem	.3144	.1101	2.8563	.0046	.0979	.5309
Hope	.5328	.0994	5.3616	.0000	.3373	.7282

Total effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI*	ULCI**
-.2627	.0419	-6.2675	.0000	-.3452	-.1803
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect	se	t	p	LLCI*	ULCI**
-.1626	.0385	-4.2286	.0000	-.2382	-.0870

Indirect effect of X on Y				
Paths	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI*	Boot ULCI**
Total indirect effect	-.1001	.0270	-.1575	-.0513
Boss's Incivility (X) → Self-esteem(M1) → Life satisfaction (Y)	-.0428	.0186	-.0829	-.0098
Boss's Incivility (X) → Hope(M2) → Life satisfaction (Y)	-.0039	.0117	-.0275	.0191
Boss's Incivility (X) → Self-esteem(M1) → Hope (M2) → Life satisfaction (Y)	-.0534	.0147	-.0864	-.0279

*LLCI = boot the lower bound of the indirect effect within the 95% confidence interval, **ULCI = boot the upper bound of the indirect effect within the 95% confidence interval.

Conclusion

This study was intended to investigate the dual mediation effects of self-esteem and hope on the effects of supervisor's incivility on life satisfaction in Korean office workers.

First, according to the Pearson correlation analysis, superior incivility was negatively correlated with life satisfaction, self-esteem and hope, and life satisfaction, self-esteem, and hope were positively correlated.

Second, as a result of analyzing the mediation effect, the incivility of the boss had a negative effect on self-esteem and life satisfaction, and self-esteem had a positive effect on hope and life satisfaction. Hope also positively influenced life satisfaction.

Third, by bootstrap, we found a dual mediation effect of self-esteem and hope on the relationship between incivility of superiors and life satisfaction. In other words, the incivility of supervisors experienced by office workers directly affects life satisfaction, but it also affects life satisfaction through dual mediation of self-esteem and hope.

This study verified the theoretical validity of incivility, which is still in the early stages of research, by analyzing the dual mediation effects on the relationship between supervisor's incivility and office workers' life satisfaction. On the other hand, by empirically analyzing the dual mediation effects of self-esteem and hope, we identified the paths that affect life satisfaction when experiencing the incivility of the supervisor. Therefore, it is necessary to develop and apply an effective worker program that can increase self-esteem and hope, which have been proven to be mediators. In addition, incivility is likely to occur in organizations consisting of two or more people. Therefore, incivility research, which is focused on service occupations, should be expanded to more diverse subjects.

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