

Assessing Workgroup Norms for Civility: The Development of the Civility Norms Questionnaire
– Brief

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Abstract

Purpose – This research describes the development and validation of the Civility Norms Questionnaire-Brief (CNQ-B), a 4-item measure designed to assess workgroup climate for civility. Climate for civility is defined as employee perceptions of norms supporting respectful treatment among workgroup members.

Design/methodology/approach – Five samples ($N = 2,711$) of adult employees, including two from distinct organizations and three from multiple organizations, responded to the CNQ-B and additional measures.

Findings – Evidence for the internal consistency, and convergent and discriminant validity of the CNQ-B was observed. Additionally, evidence for the criterion-related and incremental validity of the CNQ-B was demonstrated as it was a significant predictor of later-assessed incivility experiences and accounted for significant variability in work attitudes beyond incivility experiences and related measures.

Implications – The CNQ-B is a psychometrically sound instrument despite being comprised of only four items. The CNQ-B can be used by researchers and practitioners alike to assess climate for civility, to study climate for civility as a precursor to incivility experiences, and to target workgroups that could benefit from interventions (e.g., training) to enhance civility and reduce incivility.

Originality/value – This is one of the first studies to conduct a rigorous psychometric assessment of a measure of workgroup climate for civility that is grounded in theory and research on workplace civility and incivility. At four items, the CNQ-B is the shortest assessment tool currently available that is designed for this purpose.

Keywords: workplace incivility, workplace civility, workplace norms, climate, scale

development.

Assessing Workgroup Norms for Civility:

The Development of the Civility Norms Questionnaire – Brief

In the fast-paced world of email, bottom-lines, conference calls, and endless meetings, it is no surprise that many employees feel “under the gun” in being able to juggle their workload and maintain a relatively stress-free work-life. Heavy work demands may result in negative consequences such as minimized collegial coworker relations and the creation of a workplace climate that is devoid of respect and dignity (Pearson, Andersson, & Porath, 2000, 2005). Over time, such behavioral patterns can become encrypted into the norms and customs of the organization, leading to a self-perpetuating environment of disrespect (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001).

Despite the explicit recognition that workplace norms are central to the experience of incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2000, 2001, 2005), to date there has been little examination of such norms and the contextual features which promote civility versus incivility among employees. This is likely due to the lack of measurement tools designed for this purpose. Consequently, the development and validation of a brief measure of civility norms was the central aim of the current work. After providing an overview of literature on workplace civility and incivility, we review literature on social norms in the workplace, culminating in the derivation of our proposed construct.

Workplace Civility and Incivility

Civility has been addressed by numerous scholars in the organizational sciences and beyond. There seems to be a consensus that civility encompasses more than just good manners and etiquette (Gill & Sypher, 2009; Pearson et al., 2000, 2005; Peck, 2002; Sypher, 2004). Civility assumes an awareness that extends beyond the self, and entails conveying respect and

concern for the well-being of others (Peck, 2002; Sypher, 2004). Pearson et al. (2000) describe workplace civility as “behavior that helps to *preserve the norms for mutual respect at work* (italics added); it comprises behaviors that are fundamental to positively connecting with another, building relationships, and empathizing” (p. 125). By conceptualizing civility as behavior which serves to maintain norms for mutual respect, Pearson et al. (2000) suggest that disrespectful behavior, or workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), is kept to a minimum within a civil work environment. Gill and Sypher (2009) address this characteristic of civility directly: “Civility demands that one speaks in ways that are respectful, responsible, restrained, and principled *and avoid that which is offensive, rude, demeaning, and threatening*” (p. 55, italics added).

Indeed, incivility is generally regarded as the opposite of civility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999); a civil workplace is one in which incivility experiences are rare, just as an uncivil context is one which cannot be characterized as civil. With regard to workplace incivility, Andersson and Pearson (1999) define the construct as “low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect” (p. 457). In this sense, incivility refers to general rude and disrespectful treatment in the workplace (Pearson et al., 2001; Pearson & Porath, 2005). Incivility is conceptualized under the umbrella of employee deviance which encapsulates all behavior that violates organizational norms and jeopardizes the welfare of employees and/or the organization (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Workplace incivility is conceptually differentiated from other forms of deviant behavior due to two factors: the low intensity of the behavior and the ambiguity of intent to harm the target (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2005). Examples of low intensity behaviors include ignoring or verbally demeaning coworkers whereas ambiguity of intent refers to the inability of the target, bystanders,

or perpetrator to judge whether harm was intended (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina, Magley, Williams, & Langhout, 2001; Pearson et al. 2000; Pearson & Porath, 2005).

It is clear that uncivil experiences are associated with negative individual and organizational outcomes. Targets of incivility report decreased job satisfaction (Lim & Cortina, 2005; Lim, Cortina, & Magley, 2008; Lim & Lee, 2011; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010), motivation, commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors (Johnson & Indvik, 2001). Incivility experiences are associated with work withdrawal and turnover intentions (Cortina et al., 2001; Griffin, 2010; Lim et al., 2008; Miner-Rubino & Reed, 2010) and also have a negative influence on indicators of psychological well-being (Cortina et al., 2001; Johnson & Indvik, 2001; Lim et al., 2008; Lim & Lee, 2011). Recent findings further explicate the toxic nature of incivility, as it is linked to interpersonal conflict and counterproductive work behavior (Penney & Spector, 2005), lower performance for targets and bystanders (Caza & Cortina, 2007; Porath & Erez, 2007, 2009), and lower ratings of customer service quality (Sliter, Jex, Wolford, & McInnerney, 2010).

Due to the destructive nature of incivility, researchers have attempted to understand contextual factors that may promote such rude behavior. For example, researchers have suggested that an informal organizational climate may increase the incidence of workplace incivility, as a casual business atmosphere allows for more ambiguity on what defines acceptable behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2000). As noted by Schneider and Reichers (1983), climate perceptions are a function of the interactions among employees as they observe and model the behavior demonstrated by their peers, and over time such behavioral tendencies and practices become normative. Because norms are thought to play an important role

in civil and uncivil behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2000), in the following section we elaborate on the significance of social norms.

The Significance of Social Norms

Social norms serve as an informal guide to individual behavior both within and outside the boundaries of organizations (Feldman, 1984; Fiske, 2004; Morrison, 2006). Norms are not formally documented like the written rules of organizational policies and regulations (Morrison, 2006). As Fiske (2004) notes, norms are “behaviors of group members that act as implicit rules, considered to be both descriptive of what group members are and prescriptive of how they should be” (p. 484).

Despite being informal in nature, norms affect behavior across contexts. Empirical research suggests that norms have the potential to influence workplace behavior, such that employees might be prone to be disrespectful when they work with others who are often uncivil themselves. For example, Glomb and Liao (2003) found that the level of aggression perpetrated by coworkers was a significant positive predictor of individual perpetration, above-and-beyond the effects of several control variables (e.g., gender, tenure) and individual differences (e.g., negative affectivity, anger expression).

Norms also affect employee attitudes. For instance, Miner-Rubino and Cortina (2007) studied workplace norms for the treatment of women, which they operationalized as perceptions of observed hostility toward women and organizational unresponsiveness toward sexual harassment. Working in an environment characterized by hostility toward women was associated with depleted psychological well-being and job satisfaction, among other outcomes, and results were similar for both female and male respondents. That is, workplace norms for the disrespectful treatment of women were detrimental even for male employees who did not

personally experience such mistreatment, but nevertheless were employed in a workplace climate characterized by gendered hostility.

This scholarship points to workplace norms as a critical factor affecting employee behaviors, experiences, and attitudes. We concur with others who argue that norms are central to workplace civility and incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2000). There remains, however, a need for a measure designed to assess norms for civility in organizations. As such, the assessment of norms for mutual respect, or the existence of a climate for civility, was the focus for the development of the measure described in the present study.

The Civility Norms Questionnaire - Brief

The Civility Norms Questionnaire-Brief (CNQ-B) represents an assessment tool designed to measure workgroup climate for civility. We define climate for civility as employee perceptions of norms supporting respectful treatment among workgroup members. Workgroup norms for civility serve the parallel functions of maintaining respectful employee behavior and ensuring that workplace incivility does not occur. Indeed, Hackman (1992) notes that members often intervene to correct behavior which deviates from group norms, which in the present case would include uncivil behavior. Workgroup climate for civility, as we have conceptualized the construct, captures this characteristic by assessing practices that ensure that respectful treatment is normative and uncivil (i.e., deviant) behavior is corrected when it occurs (Hackman, 1992).

Although we argue that a specific measure for climate for civility is absent from the literature, that is not to say that other, similar measures do not exist within the nomological network of the construct. For example, several measures are designed to assess incivility experiences (e.g., Workplace Incivility Scale, Cortina et al., 2001; Uncivil Workplace Experiences Questionnaire, Martin & Hine, 2005). However, it is important to note that the focus

of these measures is on capturing individual experiences of uncivil behaviors, rather than on the context surrounding such mistreatment. One measure of the context surrounding mistreatment exists with Kessler, Spector, Chang, and Parr's (2008) 18-item Violence Climate Survey. The Violence Climate Survey was conceptualized as perceptions of "policies, practices, and procedures regarding the control and elimination of workplace violence and verbal aggression" (p. 110). Despite similar concern with interpersonal treatment, violence and verbal aggression differ theoretically from incivility with respect to both the ambiguity and severity of the behavior (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina & Magley, 2009).

Constructs and associated measures grounded in the organizational justice literature also fall within the nomological net of civility climate. Interpersonal justice is one component of interactional justice (Colquitt, 2001) which captures the extent to which employees are treated fairly and respectfully by supervisors during procedural implementation (Bies & Moag, 1986). The construct differs from our conceptualization of climate for civility in several ways, with the most evident difference being that interactional justice is restricted to treatment from supervisors and only in specific situations. Likewise, perceptions of fair interpersonal treatment (PFIT) captures more general perceptions of fair and respectful interactions with supervisors and coworkers, although the construct focuses primarily on the former (Donovan, Drasgow, & Munson, 1998). PFIT also differs from our conceptualization of climate for civility in that it does not capture practices that suppress disrespectful behavior (e.g., telling a coworker to stop their rude behavior) to maintain workgroup norms for civility (Hackman, 1992).

Finally, Osatuke, Moore, Ward, Dyrenforth, and Belton (2009) report on an 8-item Civility Scale developed by Meterko, Osatuke, Mohr, Warren, and Dyrenforth (2007) that is used to evaluate the Civility, Respect, and Engagement in the Workforce (CREW) initiative to

enhance civility in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). The VHA Civility Scale is internally consistent and it has proved useful for its intended purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the CREW intervention. A strength of the measure is that it is a global assessment that taps into a broad array of content, but this feature may also be a weakness. Some of the items appear to assess constructs that arguably extend beyond the boundaries of the construct of civility climate, including teamwork (which is akin to workgroup cohesion; Dion, 2000), acceptance of diversity, and organizational tolerance of discrimination (which are similar to diversity climate; Hicks-Clarke & Iles, 2000; Kossek & Zonia, 1993). Also, rather than focusing on a single unit of theory, the scale includes items which tap into multiple levels including the workgroup and the organization as a whole, which may cloud interpretation of scale scores. Thus, although the measure is valuable for capturing a single global assessment of civility and related constructs across multiple levels in an organization, there is value in developing a measure that is more targeted in focus.

In sum, we assert that a need remains for the development and validation of a measure assessing the existence of a climate supporting civility. Such a tool will allow investigators to examine climate for civility as a predictor of incivility experiences, as well as employee work attitudes and well-being. In developing the CNQ-B, we followed Hinkin's (1998) recommendations for scale development. The development and validation of the CNQ-B occurred over several phases and utilized multiple samples. First, in Phase 1, item generation for the CNQ-B is described, followed by the exploratory evaluation of the CNQ-B structure in Phase 2. Finally, Phase 3 describes confirmatory factor analyses and Phase 4 outlines the nomological validity estimates for the CNQ-B.

Phase 1: Development of the CNQ-B

We made several purposeful decisions to ensure a well-defined construct domain before constructing the initial pool of items. Rather than framing the measure as an assessment of a climate for *incivility*, instead we sought a positive frame by focusing on perceptions of a climate for *civility*. As we note earlier, we define climate for civility as employee perceptions of norms supporting respectful treatment among workgroup members. We anticipated that a positive frame on the measure would elicit increased ease of use by both practitioners and researchers who may be otherwise hesitant to examine interpersonal conflict within organizations. As an additional attempt to facilitate use, we sought to develop as brief an assessment tool as possible, while maintaining sound psychometric characteristics. As such, we chose to base our measure on general workgroup practices rather than specific behaviors as seen in measures of incivility experiences (e.g., Cortina et al., 2001; Martin & Hine, 2005). Finally, we focused explicitly on norms among workgroup members for two reasons. First, the concept of bond strength suggests that the strongest influences on individual behavior and attitudes stem from proximal (e.g., one's workgroup) rather than distal (e.g., organizational) influences (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000). Second, researchers have noted that fewer studies have focused explicitly on mistreatment perpetrated by coworkers, as opposed to supervisors (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). We contribute to this gap not by studying peers as perpetrators, but rather, the extent to which workgroup members work to ensure that respectful treatment is the norm.

Items developed for the CNQ-B were grounded in the literature on workplace civility and incivility reviewed earlier (e.g., Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Pearson et al., 2000, 2005; Gill & Sypher, 2009; Sypher, 2004), and in Naylor, Pritchard and Ilgen's (1980) view that organizational climate is indicated by workgroup members' anticipated consequences of engaging in certain actions. Moreover, we paid particular attention to Pearson et al.'s (2000)

conceptualization of civility as “behavior that helps to preserve the norms for mutual respect at work” (p. 125), and the notion that civility norms also serve to keep incivility from occurring which stems from Hackman’s (1992) work on groups. As such, most items indicated some form of consequence for behaving rudely by referencing general workgroup norms which implicitly suggest some form of social punishment for norm violation. In all, ten items were developed, including such items as “Angry outbursts are not tolerated by anyone in your unit/workgroup” and “Your coworkers make sure everyone in your unit/workgroup is treated with respect.”¹ In that we were conceptualizing a unidimensional structure for the scale, ten items is an adequate starting point given Hinkin’s (1998) recommendation that (a) four to six items are needed to adequately measure a construct and (b) initial scale development should begin with twice the number of items needed. The CNQ-B is scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “1” (*strongly disagree*) to “7” (*strongly agree*). Because CNQ-B items are framed positively, higher scores are indicative of a more positive climate for civility.

Phase 2: Initial Evaluation of the CNQ-B

The purpose of Phase 2 was to examine the factor structure and initial psychometric characteristics of the CNQ-B. Two samples of participants completed the initial 10-item CNQ-B. Sample 1 (working adults from multiple organizations and industries) was utilized to identify problematic items and to conduct an exploratory principal-components analysis on the items. Principal-axis factor analysis was then conducted on Sample 2 data collected from individuals employed within a single organization to further assess the CNQ-B structure.

Participants and Procedure

Sample 1. Participants were recruited through StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a web-based service that maintains a database of people willing to complete on-line surveys. A

total of 604 individuals employed in the United States were invited to take a survey on their work experiences and 350 responded (57.9% response rate). Twenty-five responses were removed either due to suspicious responding or missing data, resulting in a useable sample size of 325. The sample was primarily female (80.8%), White (78.9%), and the mean age of participants was 41.2 years ($SD = 10.5$). Participants reported working for their organizations for an average of 7.8 years ($SD = 8.1$).

Sample 2. Sample 2 consisted of a subset of employees from all locations of a major grocery chain in the northeast United States who completed online surveys designed to assess their workplace experiences. A total of 1,995 non-supervisory employees from 54 stores were sampled and 1,069 participated, resulting in a response rate of 54%. The final sample size after data cleaning was 965 employees. The mean number of respondents per store was 18, although this ranged from 5 employees to 37 employees per store. Of the respondents used in the current study, 62.2% were female and the mean age was 36.9 years ($SD = 16.7$). Respondents had a mean tenure with the organization of 6.0 years ($SD = 6.4$).

Results

Sample 1. Scale interitem correlations were first computed and three items were removed because they did not correlate at least .40 with all other items (Kim & Mueller, 1978). An exploratory principal-components analysis was then conducted on the remaining seven items. Principal-components analysis is particularly useful in the initial scale development stage to determine the structure of a set of items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1989). The scree plot (Cattell, 1966) and Kaiser criterion (eigenvalues greater than 1.0; Kaiser, 1960) served as criteria for determining the number of factors to retain. A single factor was identified which accounted for 55.6% of the total variance, below the desired level of 60% (Hinkin, 1998). In an attempt to

increase the variance accounted for by the scale, three additional items were removed because they demonstrated the lowest communalities, an indication that they were not highly related to the remaining items (Hinkin, 1998). Following the removal of these items, a second exploratory principal-components analysis was conducted on the remaining four items. A single factor was observed which accounted for 69.6% of the total variance. Coefficient alpha for the 4-item CNQ-B was $\alpha = .85$.

Sample 2. The procedure for evaluating the CNQ-B items in Sample 2 was similar to the Sample 1 strategy with the exception that principal-axis factor analysis was used in place of principal-components analysis. Three items were removed because they did not correlate at least .40 with any other item and principal-axis factor analysis was conducted on remaining items. A single factor was found which accounted for only 49.8% of the total variance. As such, two additional items were removed because of low communalities, and an additional item was eliminated because its content appeared to be distinct from that being assessed by remaining items. The remaining four items matched the final items from Sample 1. A second principal-axis factor analysis was conducted on the four items with the scree plot and Kaiser criterion indicating a single-factor solution accounting for 60.1% of the total variance. Coefficient alpha for the CNQ-B in this sample was $\alpha = .78$. See Table 1 for item factor loadings for Samples 1 and 2, respectively.

Insert Table 1 about here

Phase 3: Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Following the exploratory analyses, the 4-item CNQ-B was completed by two additional samples to conduct confirmatory factor analyses. The samples chosen for Phase 3 were similar to

those chosen for Phase 2 in that working adults from numerous locations comprised Sample 3, whereas Sample 4 included employees from a single organization. Confirmatory factor analyses of the 4-item CNQ-B were conducted independently for these two samples.

Participants and Procedure

Sample 3. Sample 3 was comprised of 446 working adults employed full-time (i.e., at least 30 hours each week). The sample was obtained with the use of a snowball sampling method in which undergraduate psychology students from a medium-sized university located in the northeastern United States received partial course credit for recruiting participants. All participants completed online surveys which included the 4-item CNQ-B and measures assessing aspects of their work experiences. The sample was 58.9% female, the mean age was 40.4 years ($SD = 12.5$), and respondents had been employed with their organization for a mean of 8.7 years ($SD = 8.7$).

Sample 4. Employees in a department of a northeastern state government in the United States had the opportunity to complete a paper-and-pencil survey with various measures designed to assess their workplace climate and functionality, within which the 4-item CNQ-B was presented. Seven hundred and ninety-one of the 1,689 employees in the department completed surveys (46.8% response rate). Of the respondents, 79.3% were male and 69.0% were White. The mean age of respondents was 41.1 years ($SD = 8.7$).

Results

Sample 3. LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996) was used to validate the one-factor structure of the CNQ-B within Sample 3. Multiple indices were utilized to assess model fit due to the sensitivity of obtaining a significant χ^2 with large sample sizes (i.e., $n > 200$) as suggested by Kline (1998), and Hu and Bentler (1999) who recommend reporting two fit indices and

considering them in combination. Specifically, we examined the comparative fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990) which is an estimate of the covariation in the data that can be explained by the specified model and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996) which estimates the standardized difference between the implied and observed covariance matrices. Hu and Bentler (1999) recommend values close to .95 or greater for the CFI and .08 or less for the SRMR to retain a model. Some have questioned strict adherence to cut points for fit indices (e.g., Chen, Curran, Bollen, Kirby, & Paxton, 2008; Marsh, Hau, & Wen, 2004), so we also considered the strength of the factor loadings as recommended by Jackson, Gillaspay, and Purc-Stephenson (2009). Given that only four items were included in the measure, we only tested the fit of a one-factor model to the data. The model with a single factor demonstrated adequate fit, $\chi^2(2) = 46.40, p < .001, CFI = .95, SRMR = .05$, with standardized loadings ranging from .68 to .90 (see Table 1). Coefficient alpha in the sample was $\alpha = .87$.

Sample 4. The fit of the one-factor model for the CNQ-B in Sample 4 was again assessed with LISREL 8.5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). Identical information was used to assess model fit as well. The collection of information suggested that the one-factor model provided an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(2) = 92.17, p < .001, CFI = .93, SRMR = .06$, with standardized loadings ranging from .61 to .88 (see Table 1). Coefficient alpha for the CNQ-B in Sample 4 was $\alpha = .82$.

Phase 4: CNQ-B Validation

The nomological network of the CNQ-B was examined with two studies in Phase 4, including assessments of convergent, discriminant, criterion-related, and incremental validity. Convergent validity was examined in Validation Study 1 through relationships between the CNQ-B and a measure of interactional justice (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993), and in Validation

Study 2 through relationships between the CNQ-B and the VHA Civility Scale (Meterko et al., 2007; Osatuke et al., 2009). Despite their differences – interactional justice centers on respectful treatment from supervisors, the VHA Civility Scale provides a global evaluation of interpersonal interactions, and the CNQ-B addresses localized norms for civility within workgroups – all measures are indicators of the quality of interpersonal treatment in the workplace. Consequently, we expected that the CNQ-B would be positively correlated with interactional justice (Validation Study 1) and the VHA Civility Scale (Validation Study 2).

Hypothesis 1: The CNQ-B will be positively associated with interactional justice.

Hypothesis 2: The CNQ-B will be positively associated with the VHA Civility Scale.

The discriminant validity of the CNQ-B was assessed in Validation Study 1. Specifically, we compared the correlation between the CNQ-B and interactional justice to the correlation between the CNQ-B and distributive justice. Interactional justice is interpersonal in focus whereas distributive justice only concerns the fair distribution of rewards; distributive justice does not capture variability with respect to how employees are treated by supervisors (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). Given this fundamental difference, the CNQ-B should have greater shared variance with interactional justice compared to distributive justice. Thus, we hypothesized that the CNQ-B would be positively correlated with distributive justice, but we expected that the strength of this relationship would be significantly lower than the correlation between the CNQ-B and interactional justice.

Hypothesis 3: The CNQ-B will be positively associated with distributive justice.

However, the correlation will be significantly lower than the correlation between the CNQ-B and interactional justice.

The criterion-related validity of the CNQ-B was examined in several ways. In Validation Study 1, we examined the ability of the CNQ-B to predict scores on constructs assessed at a later time including experiences of incivility (a single score reflecting experiences from both supervisors and coworkers), intentions to quit, general job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. In Validation Study 2, we assessed the extent to which the CNQ-B related to incivility experiences from two distinct sources (supervisor and coworkers), intentions to quit, general job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with coworkers, and affective organizational commitment.

Positive scores on the CNQ-B are indicative of a workgroup climate which supports civility and inhibits incivility, suggesting that employees perceive undesired consequences such as retribution from coworkers for engaging in uncivil acts (Hackman, 1992; Naylor et al., 1980). This implies that employees working in a context in which civility is the norm should be less likely to experience incivility given that such behavior directly conflicts with existing social norms. Thus, scores on the CNQ-B were hypothesized to be negatively associated with experiences of workplace incivility. We also note that we assessed the incremental contribution of the CNQ-B as it related to incivility experiences beyond the measure of interactional justice (Validation Study 1) and the VHA Civility Scale (Validation Study 2). In Validation Study 2, we also controlled for socially desirable responding given suggestions that levels of social

desirability may influence reports of experiences of workplace incivility (Jex, Geimer, Clark, Guidroz, & Yugo, 2010).

Hypothesis 4: The CNQ-B will be negatively associated with later-assessed experiences of workplace incivility, beyond the effects of interactional justice.

Hypothesis 5: The CNQ-B will be negatively associated with (a) incivility experiences from supervisors and (b) incivility experiences from coworkers, beyond the effects of the VHA Civility Scale and social desirability.

Furthermore, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) and the norm of reciprocity (Gouldner, 1960) posit that employees reciprocate favorable treatment and work environment conditions with similar positive attitudes and behaviors. Such effects are also consistent with Parker et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis which reported that favorable psychological climate perceptions are associated with more positive work attitudes and behavior. A positive climate for civility implies that coworkers treat one another with mutual respect; conditions that are indicative of a beneficial work environment. Based on the work on social exchange and reciprocity (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) and empirical evidence on effects of psychological climate (Parker et al., 2003), in Validation Study 1 we expected that the CNQ-B would be negatively associated with later-assessed intentions to quit and positively related to general job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment. In Validation Study 1, we examined the effects of the CNQ-B on work attitudes beyond effects of incivility experiences which were assessed concurrently with the attitudinal criteria.

Hypothesis 6: The CNQ-B will be negatively associated with later-assessed intentions to quit, and positively associated with general job satisfaction and affective organizational commitment beyond the effects of incivility experiences.

Based on the rationale outlined above, in Validation Study 2 we also predicted that the CNQ-B would be negatively associated with intentions to quit. It was also hypothesized that the CNQ-B would be positively related to general job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with coworkers, and affective organizational commitment. In Validation Study 2, we examined the incremental contribution of the CNQ-B beyond the effects of incivility from supervisors and coworkers, the VHA Civility Scale, and social desirability.

Hypothesis 7: The CNQ-B will be negatively associated with intentions to quit, and positively associated with general job satisfaction, satisfaction with supervision, satisfaction with coworkers, and affective organizational commitment beyond the effects of incivility experiences from supervisors and coworkers, the VHA Civility Scale, and social desirability.

Validation Study 1 Participants and Procedure

A portion of Sample 4 served an additional role as a validation sample for the CNQ-B. Specifically, employees completed a second survey containing additional validation measures approximately four months following the first. Employee identification numbers were used to link data from the two surveys. Usable identification numbers and responses to the focal measures were provided by 195 employees across the two survey administrations.

Validation Study 1 Measures

In addition to the 4-item CNQ-B that participants completed in the initial survey administration, participants also responded to measures of interactional justice and distributive justice. The second survey included assessments of incivility experiences, intentions to quit, job satisfaction, and affective organizational commitment. Items were evaluated on scales ranging from “1” (*strongly disagree*) to “7” (*strongly agree*) unless noted otherwise. See Table 2 for coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

Interactional justice. Interactional justice was assessed with a 9-item measure in which respondents reported the extent of their agreement with a series of statements pertaining to the quality of treatment received from management (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). A sample item reads, “When decisions are made about my job, management treats me with respect and dignity.” Higher scores are indicative of more positive interactional justice.

Distributive justice. Distributive justice was assessed with a 5-item measure in which respondents reported their agreement or disagreement with statements relating to the distribution of rewards (Niehoff & Moorman, 1993). A sample item reads, “I think that my level of pay is fair.” Higher scores suggest more positive distributive justice.

Incivility experiences. Experiences of workplace incivility from supervisors and coworkers during the previous year were assessed with a 10-item version of the Workplace Incivility Scale (WIS; Cortina et al., 2001). Sample WIS items include “Put you down or were condescending to you” and “Made insulting or disrespectful remarks about you.” The WIS was scored on a frequency scale ranging from “0” (*never*) to “4” (*many times*). Higher scores indicate greater incivility experiences.

Intentions to quit. Intentions to quit were assessed with two items from Balfour and Wechsler's (1996) measure. Items include "You often think about quitting your job" and "You will probably look for a new job during the next year." Higher scores indicate greater intentions to quit.

General job satisfaction. General job satisfaction was assessed with the 3-item measure from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, & Klesh, 1983). An example item is "You are satisfied with your job." Higher scores reflect greater job satisfaction.

Affective organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment was measured with a modified version of the corresponding 6-item subscale from Meyer and Allen's (1997) organizational commitment scale. In the items the referent was changed from "this organization" to the state department name. An example item reads "I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with (department name)." Higher scores reflect higher levels of affective organizational commitment.

Validation Study 2 Participants and Procedure

Data were collected from 184 working adults employed at least 20 hours each week. The sample was collected using a snowball sampling technique in which undergraduate psychology students from a medium-sized university located in the northeastern United States received partial course credit for recruiting adult workers. The sample was 51.8% male and the mean age was 41.2 years ($SD = 13.1$). On average, participants worked 41.8 hours per week ($SD = 8.9$) and respondents had been employed in their current position for a mean of 8.7 years ($SD = 8.7$).

Validation Study 2 Measures

Participants completed online surveys which included the 4-item CNQ-B and validation measures. Items were evaluated on scales ranging from “1” (*strongly disagree*) to “7” (*strongly agree*) unless noted otherwise. See Table 3 for coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates.

VHA Civility Scale. Participants completed the 8-item VHA Civility Scale (Meterko et al., 2007; Osatuke et al., 2009). An example item is “A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup.” Items were evaluated on a 5-point scale ranging from “1” (*strongly disagree*) to “5” (*strongly agree*).

Incivility experiences. Experiences of workplace incivility from supervisors and coworkers during the previous year were assessed with two 10-item versions of the WIS (Cortina et al., 2001) with instructions orienting the participant to the appropriate source of incivility. Items in each measure were scored on a frequency scale ranging from “0” (*never*) to “4” (*many times*). Higher scores indicate greater incivility experiences.

Intentions to quit. As in Validation Study 1, intentions to quit were assessed with two items from Balfour and Wechsler’s (1996) measure. Higher scores reflect greater intentions to quit.

General job satisfaction. Similar to Validation Study 1, general job satisfaction was assessed with the 3-item measure from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Cammann et al., 1983).

Satisfaction with supervision and coworkers. Satisfaction with supervision and coworkers were assessed with the corresponding 18-item subscales from the Job Descriptive Index (JDI; Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969). Participants respond to adjectives describing their supervisor and coworkers such as “Stimulating” and “Rude.” Responses are captured on the following scale: “0” (*no*), “1” (?), and “3” (*yes*). Higher scores reflect greater satisfaction.

Affective organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment was measured with five items from the corresponding subscale from Meyer and Allen's (1997) organizational commitment scale. Higher scores reflect higher levels of affective organizational commitment.

Social desirability. Social desirability was assessed with a shortened form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972). Participants respond to a series of statements (e.g., "I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble") that are scored true or false, with socially desirable responses being scored "1" and answers that are not socially desirable being scored "0". Higher scores denote greater socially desirable responding.

Insert Table 2 about here

Insert Table 3 about here

Results

Zero-order correlations among all variables are presented in Tables 2 and 3. The CNQ-B correlated positively with interactional justice ($r = .45, p < .01$) and the VHA Civility Scale ($r = .48, p < .01$). These results supported Hypotheses 1 and 2 and provided evidence for the convergent validity of the measure. Evidence for discriminant validity was also observed as the CNQ-B was positively related to distributive justice ($r = .32, p < .01$), but this relationship was significantly lower than the CNQ-B – interactional justice relationship ($z = 2.08, p < .05$), thereby supporting Hypothesis 3. The comparison of correlations was conducted following the procedure outlined by Meng, Rosenthal, and Rubin (1992).

Insert Table 4 about here

Insert Table 5 about here

Tables 4 and 5 present results from the hierarchical regressions conducted to explore the criterion-related and incremental validity of the CNQ-B in predicting incivility experiences. In Validation Study 1, interactional justice captured a significant amount of variation in incivility experiences in Step 1 (standardized $\beta = -.45, p < .001$), and the CNQ-B accounted for an additional 3.1% of the variation in incivility experiences in Step 2 ($\beta = -.20, p < .01$, total $R^2 = 23.4\%$). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported. In Validation Study 2, the VHA Civility Scale was a significant predictor of incivility from supervisors ($\beta = -.29, p < .001$) and incivility from coworkers ($\beta = -.42, p < .001$) in Step 1, after controlling for social desirability. In Step 2, the CNQ-B accounted for incremental variance in incivility from supervisors ($\beta = -.16, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = 2.0\%$, total $R^2 = 14.1\%$) and coworkers ($\beta = -.27, p < .001, \Delta R^2 = 5.4\%$, total $R^2 = 26.9\%$), supporting Hypothesis 5. These results support the utility of the CNQ-B as a predictor of incivility experiences beyond comparable measures.

Tables 6 and 7 present results from the hierarchical regression analyses used to examine the incremental contributions of the CNQ-B in predicting work attitudes. In Validation Study 1, the CNQ-B accounted for an additional 2.9% of the variability in intentions to quit ($\beta = -.18, p < .05$), 4.9% of the variability in job satisfaction ($\beta = .24, p < .001$), and 4.9% of the variability in affective organizational commitment ($\beta = .24, p < .001$) beyond incivility experiences. These analyses provided support for Hypothesis 6. In Validation Study 2, the CNQ-B did not account for incremental variance in intentions to quit. However, the CNQ-B did account for unique

variability in general job satisfaction ($\beta = .23, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = 3.9\%$, total $R^2 = 35.4\%$), satisfaction with supervision ($\beta = .18, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = 2.2\%$, total $R^2 = 47.4\%$), and satisfaction with coworkers ($\beta = .18, p < .01, \Delta R^2 = 2.3\%$, total $R^2 = 34.6\%$). Although the CNQ-B accounted for an additional 1.2% of the variance in affective organizational commitment, this effect was not statistically significant at $p < .05$ so Hypothesis 7 was partially supported. Collectively, these findings suggest that the CNQ-B has value as a predictor of work-related attitudes.

Insert Table 6 about here

Insert Table 7 about here

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to develop a brief measure to capture employee perceptions of workgroup civility norms. The psychometric properties of the CNQ-B were assessed across five samples ($N = 2,711$) with findings suggesting a 4-item single-factor structure. Our brief measure had high internal consistency in each sample and evidence for the convergent, discriminant, criterion-related, and incremental validity of the CNQ-B was observed.

Findings from this study further highlight the importance of developing incivility-free workplaces and establishing work environments where civility is the norm. Although our measure focuses on workgroup norms for civility, and such norms are predictive of future incivility experiences and employee attitudes and perceptions, we concur with others (e.g., Bennett, Aquino, Reed, & Thau, 2005; Porath & Pearson, 2010; Robinson & Bennett, 1997) who assert that norms are a function, first and foremost, of the behavior of organizational leaders. Pearson et al. (2000) argue that a first step for organizations seeking to develop organizational

climates with strong norms for civility is to incorporate specific statements pertaining to accepted conduct among employees into their organizational values, thus setting behavioral expectations for all to follow. Perhaps more importantly, organizational leaders must behave in a manner consistent with these expectations as their own actions speak volumes more than mere values statements (Porath & Pearson, 2010). Positive norms for civility among employees are likely to be considerably more difficult to foster when leaders set a poor example by displaying uncivil behaviors.

The aforementioned discussion is not intended to undermine the value in assessing norms for civility explicitly within workgroups. Research indicates that being mistreated by coworkers is harmful to employee welfare (Hershcovis & Barling, 2010). Hershcovis and Barling also note that research explicitly investigating peers as sources of mistreatment is lacking. We take a complementary view in studying the extent to which coworkers ensure that mutual respect is the norm. The CNQ-B was significantly and negatively associated with experiences of incivility which supports the notion that the existence of a positive climate for civility helps to ensure that peer-to-peer incivility is minimal. The CNQ-B also accounted for significant variation in work attitudes beyond incivility experiences and a similar civility measure. Collectively, these findings bolster the need for researchers and practitioners to assess both climate perceptions and experiences of incivility to develop a comprehensive understanding of psychosocial drivers of work attitudes.

It is also worthwhile to note the prospect of variation in norms for civility across units of analysis, although this has not always been explicitly considered. For example, the initial definition of employee deviance offered by Robinson and Bennett (1995) suggested that mistreatment experiences violate organizational norms despite the fact that the organizational

norms themselves may be characterized by incivility. More recently, Bennett et al. (2005) modified the initial definition of employee deviance to the following: “voluntary behavior of organizational members that has the potential to cause harm to the organization or to those within, and in so doing violates significant performance-enhancing norms” (p. 111). This definition is an improvement because it shifts attention from behavior that contrasts organizational norms to a broader focus on any behavior that hinders performance. By doing so, the authors suggest that norms may vary, for instance, from positive norms for civility in some workgroups to more negative norms for uncivil treatment in other contexts. With the CNQ-B, organizational researchers and practitioners are equipped with a brief tool to assess norms for civility in their workplaces, allowing them to target particular locations which might benefit from interventions designed to nurture and sustain civil work environments.

Study Strengths, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research

The primary strength of the current work derives from the use of multiple, large samples that encompass both within- and cross-organization perspectives on civility norms. Results provide evidence that the measure should function appropriately in a variety of organizational settings. In addition, data used to assess the validity of the scale (Validation Study 1) was collected over two time points with roughly four months separating data collections. These data help to minimize concerns about response bias entering into the validation efforts for the CNQ-B, as collecting data over time minimizes the potential for artificially inflated associations due to method variance (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Clark, 2002). Finally, the CNQ-B accounted for unique variance in criteria beyond the VHA Civility Scale which supports its utility as a measure of climate for civility. Nevertheless, given their differences noted earlier and unique contributions to criteria examined in the present study, we feel that both measures should prove useful in

continued research on workplace civility.

Despite these strengths, there are several limitations associated with our study. The first limitation pertains to the fact that all data were collected by full-time employees working in the United States. Additional research is needed to examine the validity of the CNQ-B in samples outside North America to ensure that the relationships observed in the present study generalize to other contexts. In addition, all our measures were collected via self-report, and it is important to keep this in mind as results are interpreted. Finally, our assessment of the CNQ-B was limited to the individual level-of-analysis. This conceptualization of employee norms for civility is akin to Schneider and Reichers' (1983) definition of psychological climate (i.e., individual work environment perceptions). This differs from organizational climate, defined by Schneider and Reichers as "the summated, averaged meanings that people attach to a particular feature" of the work environment (p. 21). One might conceptualize employee perceptions of norms for civility at the individual level, as we have done, or at higher levels. Future research is needed to assess the CNQ-B at higher levels-of-analysis to better understand how this construct and measure operates across multiple levels.

Conclusion

In the present study, we described the development and validation of the CNQ-B, a concise measure of workgroup climate for civility. With data from employees in five samples, we provided evidence of the sound psychometric properties of the CNQ-B. The collection of evidence in this study offers support for the utility of the CNQ-B as a measure of workgroup climate for civility, and as a predictor of incivility experiences and work attitudes. Due to the support for the CNQ-B observed here, our hope is that researchers and practitioners alike will utilize the CNQ-B in future efforts to explore norms for civility in organizations.

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Footnote

¹ We thank Christine Porath for sharing four possible items in this item development phase (Porath, Shapiro, & Duffy, 2004). None of these remained, however, in the final CNQ-B.

Table 1

CNQ-B Items and Factor Loadings by Sample

Item	Factor Loadings by Sample			
	1	2	3	4
Rude behavior is not accepted by your coworkers.	.77	.69	.70	.67
Angry outbursts are not tolerated by anyone in your unit/workgroup.	.70	.63	.68	.61
Respectful treatment is the norm in your unit/workgroup.	.78	.73	.86	.77
Your coworkers make sure everyone in your unit/workgroup is treated with respect.	.84	.69	.90	.88

Note. Sample 1 data were analyzed using principal-components analysis. Sample 2 data were analyzed using principal-axis factor analysis. Samples 3 and 4 were analyzed using confirmatory factor analysis.

Table 2

Zero-order Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Validation Study 1; Hypotheses 1 and 3

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. CNQ-B	4.77	1.25	(.81)						
2. Interactional Justice	3.30	1.57	.45**	(.97)					
3. Distributive Justice	4.39	1.23	.32**	.51**	(.72)				
4. Incivility Experiences	.69	.89	-.36**	-.45**	-.33**	(.94)			
5. Intentions to Quit	2.66	1.81	-.29**	-.40**	-.25**	.36**	(.80)		
6. General Job Satisfaction	5.22	1.54	.37**	.52**	.34**	-.46**	-.75**	(.90)	
7. Affective Commitment	4.03	1.47	.32**	.59**	.23**	-.31**	-.49**	.66**	(.87)

Note. CNQ-B = Civility Norms Questionnaire – Brief. Coefficient alphas are in parentheses along the diagonal. N = 195. * $p < .05$. **

$p < .01$.

Table 3

Zero-order Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Variables in Validation Study 2; Hypothesis 2

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. CNQ-B	5.40	1.19	(.84)									
2. VHA Civility Scale	3.98	.65	.48**	(.91)								
3. Coworker Incivility Experiences	.64	.62	-.42**	-.42**	(.90)							
4. Supervisor Incivility Experiences	.30	.44	-.27**	-.29**	.51**	(.89)						
5. Intentions to Quit	2.86	1.71	-.28**	-.48**	.22**	.18*	(.79)					
6. General Job Satisfaction	5.45	1.35	.44**	.56**	-.26**	-.21**	-.67**	(.89)				
7. Satisfaction with Supervision	2.25	.62	.43**	.49**	-.43**	-.58**	-.40**	.48**	(.87)			
8. Satisfaction with Coworkers	2.31	.58	.43**	.50**	-.45**	-.30**	-.30**	.42**	.49**	(.86)		
9. Affective Commitment	4.63	1.26	.34**	.55**	-.17*	-.19*	-.62**	.70**	.46**	.37**	(.79)	
10. Social Desirability	6.72	2.24	.07	.02	-.20**	-.20**	-.07	.08	.11	.06	.11	(.70)

Note. CNQ-B = Civility Norms Questionnaire – Brief. Coefficient alphas are in parentheses along the diagonal where applicable. N =

184. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 4

Incremental Contributions of the CNQ-B in Predicting Incivility Experiences; Hypothesis 4

Variable	Incivility Experiences	
	β	ΔR^2
Model 1		20.3%
Interactional Justice	-.45***	
Model 2		3.1%
Interactional Justice	-.36***	
CNQ-B	-.20**	
Total R^2		23.4%

Note. Validation Study 1. N = 195. Standardized coefficients reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 5

Incremental Contributions of the CNQ-B in Predicting Incivility Experiences; Hypothesis 5

Variable	Incivility Experiences from Supervisors		Incivility Experiences from Coworkers	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Model 1		12.1%		21.5%
VHA Civility Scale	-.29***		-.42***	
Social Desirability	-.19**		-.19**	
Model 2		2.0%		5.4%
VHA Civility Scale	-.21**		-.29***	
Social Desirability	-.18**		-.17**	
CNQ-B	-.16*		-.27***	
Total R^2		14.1%		26.9%

Note. Validation Study 2. N = 184. Standardized coefficients reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Incremental Contributions of the CNQ-B in Predicting Work Attitudes; Hypothesis 6

Variable	Intentions to Quit		General Job Satisfaction		Affective Organizational Commitment	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Model 1		12.7%		20.7%		9.5%
Incivility Experiences	.36***		-.46***		-.31***	
Model 2		2.9%		4.9%		4.9%
Incivility Experiences	.29***		-.37***		-.22**	
CNQ-B	-.18*		.24***		.24***	
Total R^2		15.6%		25.6%		14.4%

Note. Validation Study 1. N = 195. Standardized coefficients reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 7

Incremental Contributions of the CNQ-B in Predicting Work Attitudes; Hypothesis 7

Variable	Intentions to Quit		General Job Satisfaction		Satisfaction with Supervision		Satisfaction with Coworkers		Affective Organizational Commitment	
	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2	β	ΔR^2
Model 1		23.6%		31.5%		45.2%		32.3%		31.9%
Supervisor Incivility Experiences	.04		-.03		-.45***		-.06		-.06	
Coworker Incivility Experiences	-.01		.00		-.06		-.27**		.13	
VHA Civility Scale	-.47***		.54***		.34***		.37***		.58***	
Social Desirability	-.05		.06		.00		-.02		.11	
Model 2		.3%		3.9%		2.2%		2.3%		1.2%
Supervisor Incivility Experiences	.04		-.02		-.44***		-.06		-.06	
Coworker Incivility Experiences	-.02		.06		-.02		-.22**		.16*	
VHA Civility Scale	-.45***		.46***		.27***		.30***		.53***	
Social Desirability	-.05		.06		.00		-.02		.11	
CNQ-B	-.06		.23**		.18**		.18*		.13	
Total R^2		23.9%		35.4%		47.4%		34.6%		33.1%

Note. Validation Study 2. N = 184. Standardized coefficients reported. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.