Promoting Productive Dialogue in the Workplace: The Profound Influence of Civility

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Abstract. This study investigates the transformative influence of civility in promoting constructive dialogue within the unique context of the Islamic University in Iraq. In an environment where diverse perspectives, values, and cultures intersect, cultivating a respectful and open platform for dialogue becomes a crucial factor for success. Through an extensive review of academic literature, interviews, and surveys conducted at the Islamic University, this study examines how civility affects communication dynamics, employee engagement, and overall productivity in this specific setting. The findings illuminate that civility plays a pivotal role in creating a workplace culture that values diverse opinions and encourages open dialogue. Civility fosters a sense of psychological safety, allowing faculty, staff, and students to express their views, beliefs, and concerns without apprehension. Moreover, it enhances trust, forging stronger interpersonal relationships across cultural and professional boundaries. Leadership's commitment to modeling and promoting civility has been identified as a key driver in shaping the dialogue climate at the university.

1. Introduction

Civility and dialogue in the workplace are crucial components of a healthy and productive work environment. In today's fast-paced and diverse professional world, fostering respectful interactions and open communication is essential for the well-being of employees and the success of organizations. This introduction will provide an overview of the importance of civility and dialogue in the workplace, highlighting their significance, benefits, and the challenges they address. Civility in the workplace refers to the practice of showing respect, politeness, and courtesy towards colleagues, superiors, and subordinates. It involves treating others with dignity and empathy, even in the face of disagreements or conflicts. Dialogue, on the other hand, entails open and constructive communication. It is a platform for sharing ideas, exchanging information, and resolving differences in a respectful and considerate manner. The significance of civility and dialogue in the workplace cannot be overstated. They create a positive atmosphere that promotes employee well-being, job satisfaction, and mental health. When employees feel respected and valued, they are more motivated, engaged, and likely to stay with their organization. Moreover, open dialogue encourages the free flow of ideas and creativity, leading to improved problem-solving and innovation. It helps in conflict resolution, prevents misunderstandings, and fosters a sense of belonging and inclusivity among the workforce. However, despite their numerous advantages, cultivating civility and dialogue in the workplace can be challenging. The fast-paced nature of many workplaces, coupled with diverse backgrounds and perspectives of employees, can sometimes lead to miscommunication, conflicts, and incivility. To address these challenges, organizations need to prioritize fostering a culture of respect and open communication, providing training and resources, and setting clear expectations for behavior. In this exploration of civility and dialogue in the workplace, we will delve deeper into these topics, offering insights, strategies, and best practices to create a more harmonious and productive work environment. Ultimately, by embracing civility and dialogue, organizations can reap the benefits of enhanced collaboration, increased innovation, and improved employee satisfaction, ultimately contributing to their overall success.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Civility

"Civility" refers to the practice of treating others with respect, courtesy, and politeness, even in challenging or contentious situations. It involves showing consideration for the feelings and perspectives of others and engaging in constructive and civil discourse[1]. Civility is a fundamental aspect of a healthy and functional society, as it promotes cooperation, tolerance, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts[2].

Civility identification refers to the practice of recognizing and promoting civil behavior and interactions in various settings, such as in public discourse, social interactions, and online communities[3]. Civility is characterized by politeness, respect, and consideration for others, even in the face of disagreements or differing opinions[4]. It involves maintaining a respectful and courteous tone when communicating with others and refraining from engaging in harmful or offensive behavior [5]. In today's world, civility identification is important for several reasons: Promoting Respectful Discourse: Civility identification encourages individuals to engage in discussions and debates while maintaining a level of respect for others' opinions and perspectives [6]. Reducing Conflict: Civility can help de-escalate conflicts and prevent confrontations by encouraging people to communicate their thoughts and concerns in a non-hostile manner [7]. Fostering Inclusivity: Civil behavior can create a more inclusive environment where individuals from diverse backgrounds and with differing views feel comfortable expressing themselves [8]. Online Community Management: In online communities, civility identification is crucial for moderating and managing discussions, preventing harassment, and maintaining a healthy and welcoming atmosphere [9]. Workplace Environment: In a professional setting, civility identification can lead to a more productive and harmonious workplace, as employees treat each other with respect and professionalism[10]. Identifying civility typically involves monitoring and addressing instances of uncivil behavior, promoting and enforcing community guidelines or codes of conduct, and providing education and awareness about the importance of civility[11].Civility can be recognized through behaviors such as active listening, empathy, avoiding personal attacks, and using respectful language and tone. Efforts to encourage civility may include training, public awareness campaigns, and community guidelines that set expectations for respectful behavior. Ultimately, civility identification aims to create a more respectful and considerate society in which individuals can engage in meaningful discussions and interactions while maintaining a sense of respect for one another[12]. Civility is not about suppressing one's own beliefs or opinions but about finding a way to express them respectfully and engage in open and productive dialogue with others .It is essential for the well-being of both individual relationships and society as a whole [13], Suggest[14]. Civility in the workplace and in society, in general, can be understood and measured through various dimensions. While the specific dimensions of civility may vary depending on the source and context, a common framework includes the following three dimensions:

2.2 Civility as Politeness

Civility, when described as "politeness," refers to the practice of using courteous and considerate behavior in one's interactions with others[15]. Politeness is a fundamental aspect of civility and is characterized by showing respect, courtesy, and good manners when engaging with people in various social and professional settings. Politeness in the context of civility involves actions such as saying "please" and "thank you," using appropriate forms of address, showing patience and understanding, and generally being mindful of the feelings and comfort of those with whom you are interacting[16]. It can encompass a wide range of behaviors, including holding doors for others, waiting your turn in a queue, and refraining from using offensive language[17]. Politeness is a key component of civility because it helps create a more respectful and harmonious social environment. It fosters positive interactions, reduces tension and conflict, and makes it easier for people to communicate and work together effectively. In this sense, politeness and civility go hand in hand, with politeness being one of the practical expressions of civility in daily life[18].

2.3 Moral Civility

"Moral civility" refers to the practice of conducting oneself with both civility and ethical principles in mind[19]. It involves not only being polite and respectful in one's interactions with others but also adhering to a set of moral or ethical values and principles[20]. Key aspects of moral civility may include: Respect for Others: Treating individuals with respect and valuing their inherent worth as human beings[21]. This involves refraining from behaviors that may harm or demean others[22]. Ethical Behavior: Acting in accordance with a personal or societal code of ethics or moral principles. This may involve making choices that align with notions of right and wrong. Honesty and Integrity: Being truthful and transparent in your interactions, even in situations where it might be tempting to deceive or manipulate.

Empathy and Compassion: Showing understanding and compassion for the feelings and perspectives of others, particularly in situations where individuals are vulnerable or in need[23]. Justice and Fairness: Advocating for and practicing justice and fairness in interactions, and promoting equity and equality. Responsibility: Taking responsibility for one's actions and their consequences, particularly when those actions impact others. Moral civility encompasses both the ethical and interpersonal dimensions of behavior. It reflects an approach to interactions that prioritizes both ethical values and the principles of civility, resulting in a respectful, just, and empathetic approach to engaging with others[24].

2.4 Justificatory Civility

Justificatory civility is a concept rooted in political and moral philosophy that pertains to how individuals in a pluralistic society engage in discussions and debates about their differing beliefs and values. It emphasizes the importance of conducting these conversations in a manner that is respectful, rational, and aimed at reaching a shared understanding or consensus[25]. Here are some key aspects of justificatory civility: Respect for Diverse Perspectives: Justificatory civility encourages individuals to respect the diversity of opinions, worldviews, and cultural backgrounds present in a society[26]. It emphasizes that people should approach discussions with an open mind and a willingness to listen to others, even when they strongly disagree. Rational Discourse: It promotes the use of rational arguments and evidence-based reasoning in discussions[27]. Instead of resorting to ad hominem attacks, emotional outbursts, or fallacious arguments, individuals should engage in thoughtful and logical discourse. Mutual Justification: In justificatory civility, the goal of a conversation is to provide reasons or justifications for one's beliefs and actions[28]. Participants should be willing to offer and evaluate reasons for their positions and be open to having their own beliefs subjected to critical examination. Sincerity: Participants are expected to be sincere in their engagement. This means that they should express their true beliefs and not engage in manipulative or deceitful tactics during discussions. Openness to Revision: Justificatory civility encourages a willingness to revise one's beliefs or positions when confronted with compelling counterarguments or evidence[29]. It acknowledges that, in the process of engaging with others, one's own perspective may evolve. Public Reason: The concept of public reason is closely related to justificatory civility. It suggests that in the public sphere, people should rely on reasons and arguments that are acceptable to all reasonable citizens, regardless of their specific comprehensive doctrines (philosophical or religious beliefs). This ensures that public debates are inclusive and respectful of diverse viewpoints. Tolerance: While justificatory civility promotes critical engagement with differing views, it also emphasizes the importance of tolerance for disagreement[30]. It recognizes that in a pluralistic society, complete agreement is often unattainable, and individuals should learn to coexist and collaborate despite their differences. Democratic Deliberation: Justificatory civility is often associated with democratic principles. It provides a framework for how citizens in a democratic society should engage in public deliberation, ensuring that decisions are made through a process that is respectful, rational, and inclusive[31]. In summary, justificatory civility is a framework for constructive, respectful, and rational discourse in pluralistic societies. It seeks to enhance the quality of public debates, foster understanding among diverse groups, and promote the democratic ideal of making collective decisions through reasoned discussion[32].

2.5 Dialogue in the Workplace

The historical development of dialogue in the workplace has evolved over time, reflecting changes in organizational structures, communication technology, and societal norms[33]. In pre-industrial societies, workplaces were often small-scale, with limited formalized communication structures[34]. Workplace dialogue was largely based on face-to-face interactions, as there were no advanced communication tools or technologies [35].The Industrial Revolution brought about significant changes in the workplace, including the growth of large factories and organizations[36]. Hierarchical structures and formalized communication channels emerged, with a clear divide between management and labor. In the early 20th century, the rise of scientific management, as advocated by Frederick Taylor, emphasized efficiency and standardization in the workplace[37]. Communication was still largely top-down, with little room for dialogue or input from employees[38]. The mid-20th century saw the emergence of human relations theory, which stressed the importance of interpersonal relationships in the workplace. This period marked the beginning of efforts to improve workplace dialogue, with an emphasis on employee engagement and feedback[39].The late 20th century brought significant advancements in communication technology, such as email, intranets, and later, the Internet. These tools facilitated more immediate and varied forms of workplace communication, enabling greater interaction and collaboration[40].The 21st century has witnessed a dramatic shift in workplace dialogue with the advent of social media, video conferencing, and instant messaging platforms. These technologies have made remote work and global collaboration more feasible,

changing the dynamics of workplace dialogue[41]. In recent decades, there has been a growing emphasis on employee engagement and empowerment, with organizations recognizing the value of open dialogue. Initiatives like employee feedback programs, open-door policies, and regular performance reviews have become more common[42]. There is also a growing focus on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, which has led to increased dialogue surrounding these issues[43]. Dialogue and communication are vital for addressing issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion[44]. Modern workplaces face challenges such as information overload, the need for remote collaboration, and in-person balancing and virtual communication. Effective workplace dialogue now encompasses a mix of formal and informal channels, including meetings, emails, instant messaging, and social platforms[45].

A literature review on the topic of "Dialogue in the Workplace" explores the importance of effective communication and dialogue within organizational settings[46]. It delves into various aspects of workplace dialogue, including its impact on employee engagement, productivity, conflict resolution, and overall organizational performance[47]. Workplace dialogue refers to the open and constructive exchange of ideas, information, and feedback among employees, managers, and other stakeholders within an organization[48]. Effective dialogue involves active listening, clear communication, and the willingness to engage in meaningful conversations. Effective workplace dialogue is crucial for several reasons: Dialogue fosters a sense of belonging and involvement, leading to increased employee engagement and satisfaction. Dialogue serves as a tool for addressing and resolving conflicts, enhancing workplace harmony[49]. Open dialogue encourages idea sharing and innovation, which can benefit the organization[50]. Effective leaders use dialogue to inspire and motivate their teams. and Literature often highlights the use of various communication channels for workplace dialogue, including face-to-face meetings, emails, instant messaging, and collaboration tools suggest that training programs in communication and dialogue skills can improve interpersonal relationships and overall communication within the workplace[51].It suggest[52]that training programs in communication and dialogue skills can improve interpersonal relationships and overall communication within the workplace. In the context of workplace dialogue as identified by [53], the three dimensions are:

Mutuality: "Mutuality in the dialogue" refers to the idea that communication between two or more parties should involve a sense of shared understanding, respect, and engagement[54].It suggests[55]that a conversation should be a two-way or multi-way exchange where all participants have an opportunity to speak, listen, and be heard.

Propinquity: is a term that refers to the state of being close to someone or something in terms of physical proximity, nearness, or closeness[56]. It can also refer to the social or emotional closeness between individuals[57].

Empathy: is a fundamental element of effective communication and dialogue. It involves understanding and sharing the feelings and perspectives of others[58], From the information provided, the research hypotheses for the study can be formulated as follows:

Hypothesis(H1): There is a statistically significant positive impact relationship between "civility as politeness" and "Dialogue in the Workplace" in the study sample.

Hypothesis(H2): There is a statistically significant positive impact relationship between " moral civility" and "Dialogue in the Workplace" in the study sample.

Hypothesis(H3): There is a statistically significant positive impact relationship between " justificatory civility" and "Dialogue in the Workplace" in the study sample.

Based on the hypotheses, formulated is the hypothetical model for the study (See figure1):
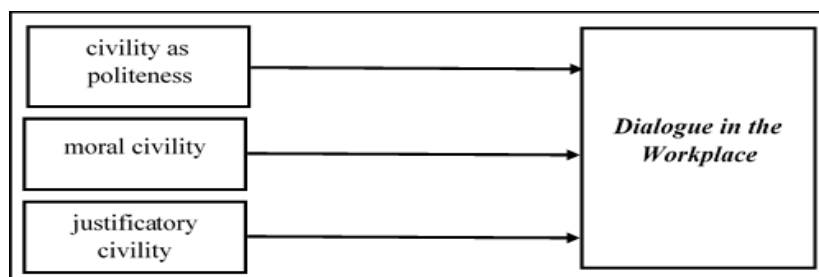

Figure 1 : Study Model

In this diagram, "Civility as Politeness," "Moral Civility," and "Justificatory Civility" are depicted as independent variables that each have a statistically significant positive impact relationship with "Dialogue in the Workplace," which is the dependent variable. This represents the three hypotheses you've mentioned. The arrows indicate the direction of the relationships, showing that each form of civility is expected to positively impact dialogue in the workplace.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

Through a survey of a sample of leaders at the Islamic University in Iraq, and to obtain the primary data for this study, questionnaires were distributed to individuals in the sample, with a total of (120) respondents out of the total study population, which amounts to (172). It was found that (8) questionnaires did not contain complete data and were therefore excluded. In addition, an outlier test was conducted, which revealed the presence of (5) outlier and extreme data points. Therefore, these data points were also excluded from the dataset, resulting in a final sample size of (107) valid questionnaires for statistical analysis, which represents (89%) of the initial sample, a acceptable and high percentage. The questionnaires were filled out, processed, and analyzed using the statistical software SPSS. The researchers determined the sample size based on the statistical source [59]. The researchers also ensured the reliability of the study's questionnaire in all its domains using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which was found to be (0.885), with a total of 30 questionnaire items. This indicates a high level of reliability, and the questionnaire in its final form is considered suitable for distribution. This confirms the questionnaire's validity and reliability, providing the researchers with full confidence in the questionnaire's accuracy and suitability for analyzing the results and testing the study's hypotheses.

3.2 Measures

The measures used to assess the variables in this study are as follows:

Civility: This variable comprises three sub-variables, which are (civility as politeness, moral civility, justificatory civility). Participants were asked to rate their agreement on a Likert scale consisting of 5 points: ("1" = "totally disagree" and "5" = "totally agree").

Dialogue in the Workplace: This variable also contains three sub-variables, which are (Mutuality, Propinquity, Empathy). Participants were asked to express their agreement on a Likert scale with 5 points: ("1" = "totally disagree" and "5" = "totally agree").

4. Results

Table (1) presents the results of the responses of the sample individuals, including the means and standard deviations for all the civility variable items. The means for these items ranged from (2.19) to (3.99), and the standard deviations varied between (0.109) and (1.89). It was revealed that the overall mean for all civility dimension items was (3.49).

Table 1. illustrates the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the items of the " Civility"

N	paragraphs	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	ranking	an assessment
	civility as politeness				
1.	The spirit of cooperation and teamwork prevails in the workplace.	3.99	1.17	1	High
2.					
3.	Leadership works to resolve conflicts fairly.	3.82	1.41	2	High
4.	Leaders take a personal interest in employees.	3.52	1.56	4	Average
5.	Leaders can be relied upon when needed.	3.60	1.10	3	High
6.	Leadership does not tolerate discrimination.	3.48	1.25	5	Low
7.	Differences among employees are respected and valued.	2.19	0.134	6	Low

	moral civility				
1.	Leadership deals with employees honestly and sincerely.	3.37	1.80	3	Average
2.	Leadership encourages ethical conduct and respect among employees.	3.72	0.181	1	High
3.	Leadership fosters positive traits like fairness and self-control.	2.83	1.75	5	Low
4.	Leadership helps unlock human potential.	3.61	0.601	2	High
5.	Leadership encourages tolerance and consideration of others' feelings and beliefs.	3.00	1.06	4	Average
	justificatory civility				
1.	Leadership treats employees as free and equal in rights.	3.89	1.65	3	Average
2.	Upholding values and beliefs while balancing them reasonably.	3.97	1.57	1	High
3.	Setting policies that satisfy employees to the best extent.	3.35	0.109	4	Low
4.	Rules are justified to each employee based on convincing reasons.	3.96	1.89	2	High
5.	Leadership mindset is characterized by general justification of organization rules.	2.91	1.74	5	Low
	arithmetic mean of all the paragraphs in the civility.	3.49	1.78		Average

Table (2) illustrates the results related to the responses of the sample individuals, along with the mean values and standard deviations for all the "Dialogue in the Workplace" items. These responses ranged from low to high, with mean values ranging from (2.32) to (3.90) and standard deviations ranging from (0.103) to (1.119). It became evident that the overall mean value for all the "Dialogue in the Workplace" items was (3.59).

Table 2. illustrates the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the items of the "Dialogue in the Workplace"

N	paragraphs	arithmetic mean	standard deviation	ranking	an assessment
	Mutuality				
1.	leadership and employees share the same goals.	3.76	1.23	2	High
2.	leadership collaborates with employees to create a better work environment.	3.90	1.03	1	Average
3.	Employees have equal relationships with the leadership.	3.08	1.37	3	Low
	Propinquity				
1.	Employees' opinions are taken into consideration in matters that affect them.	3.01	1.82	3	Low
2.	Employees have the opportunity to express their concerns.	3.48	1.31	2	Average
3.	leadership encourages enhancing employee participation.	3.64	1.52	1	High
	Empathy				
1.	leadership continuously supports the employees.	3.80	1.119	1	High
2.	leadership listens to the employees' concerns.	3.09	1.05	3	Low
3.	leadership values and respects the employees.	2.32	0.103	2	Average
	arithmetic mean of all the paragraphs in the workplace dialogue.	3.59	1.75		Average

It appears from Table (3) that the dimensions of civility (the independent variable) have a statistically significant effect on enhancing "Dialogue in the Workplace" (the dependent variable). This is evident from the calculated F-value, which was (11.102), and the significance level (Sig) is (0.000), which is less than (0.05). Additionally, the value of the determination coefficient (R2) is (0.527), confirming the significance of the regression.

For the "civility as politeness" variable, the coefficient (B) was (315), and the t-value was (3.101) with a significance level of (0.014), which is also less than (0.05), confirming the significance of the regression coefficient.

Regarding the "moral civility" variable, the coefficient (B) was (296), and the t-value was (2.681) with a significance level of (0.012), which is less than (0.05), further confirming the significance of the regression coefficient.

As for the "justificatory civility" variable, the coefficient (B) was (0.415), and the t-value was (3.198) with a significance level of (0.009), which is less than (0.05), indicating the significance of the regression coefficient.

Based on the results mentioned above, the study's hypotheses are accepted, indicating a statistically significant positive impact of civility dimensions on "Dialogue in the Workplace" at the Islamic University in Iraq.

Table 3. Results of Regression Model

D.V	R^2	F	Sig F	I.V	β	Error	T	P - Value
dialogue in the workplace	.527	11.102	0.000	civility as politeness	.315	.165	3.101	0.014
				moral civility	.296	.106	2.681	0.012
				justificatory civility	.415	.129	3.198	0.009

5. Conclusions

Promoting constructive dialogue in the workplace for university leaders at Islamic University Najaf, Iraq, is of paramount importance. A respectful and inclusive work environment not only enhances productivity but also strengthens the institution's reputation and fosters a sense of community. Here are some key takeaways and conclusions regarding this endeavor: University leaders play a pivotal role in setting the tone for the workplace. Their actions and attitudes influence the behavior and attitudes of the entire community. Embracing diversity and fostering an inclusive environment is central to dialogue civility. By appreciating and respecting different perspectives and backgrounds, the university can harness a wealth of knowledge and experiences. Clear and open communication is vital in dialogue civility and dialogue. University leaders should ensure that expectations, policies, and information are communicated transparently and consistently. Employees should have access to processes that allow them to address disputes or concerns in a fair and respectful manner. Encouraging debates and discussions within an atmosphere of mutual respect is a balancing act university leaders must navigate. Nurturing leadership skills and fostering respect within the workplace should be an ongoing process. Promoting dialogue in the workplace is important for fostering a healthy and productive environment, particularly in an academic setting like Islamic University Najaf in Iraq. Here are some considerations for university leaders to enhance dialogue in the workplace: University leaders should model respectful and civil behavior in their interactions with faculty, staff, and students. Effective communication is crucial for maintaining a respectful workplace. Leaders should encourage open and honest dialogue. Employees should know where to turn when they face issues, and they should have confidence in the process. Provide mentorship programs to help employees develop their leadership skills and foster respectful workplace behavior. Encourage aspiring leaders to understand the importance of civility. Creating a workplace culture that values civility and open dialogue is an ongoing process. University leaders play a pivotal role in setting the tone and creating an environment where everyone feels respected and heard. By implementing these strategies, you can contribute to a more harmonious and productive workplace at Islamic University Najaf, Iraq.

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