

## HOW AND WHEN WORKPLACE INCIVILITY UNDERMINES JOB EMBEDDEDNESS: THE ROLES OF JOB SATISFACTION AND PROTEAN CAREERS IN GEN Z

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### Abstract:

**Background:** In today's dynamic work environments, understanding the factors that influence employee retention is crucial. For Generation Z, the newest cohort in the workforce, negative interpersonal experiences, such as workplace incivility, pose a significant threat to their stability and integration within an organization.

**Purpose:** This study advances job embeddedness theory by examining workplace incivility as an antecedent while investigating the mediating mechanism (job satisfaction) and boundary condition (protean career attitudes) that explain and modify this relationship.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Data were collected from 382 Generation Z employees across various Indonesian industries using a two-wave time-lagged design. Hypotheses were tested using PROCESS analysis in SmartPLS 4.0, incorporating moderated mediation to examine the proposed relationships.

**Findings/Results:** This study revealed that workplace incivility negatively impacts both job satisfaction and job embeddedness, with job satisfaction mediating the incivility-embeddedness relationship. Protean career attitudes (PCA) moderated these relationships by (1) buffering the adverse effects of incivility on job satisfaction and embeddedness and (2) amplifying the positive relationship between satisfaction and embeddedness, with effects strengthening at higher PCA levels.

**Conclusion:** This study confirms that workplace incivility reduces job embeddedness by lowering job satisfaction among Gen Z employees. However, protean career attitude (PCA) acts as a key resilience factor, buffering this negative effect. It weakens the impact of incivility on satisfaction.

**Originality/value (State of the art):** This study makes dual theoretical contributions by (1) identifying job satisfaction as the psychological mechanism translating incivility into reduced embeddedness and (2) demonstrating PCA's novel dual function as both a buffer against adverse effects and amplifier of positive relationships in the incivility-embeddedness nexus, particularly for younger generational cohorts.

**Keywords:** workplace incivility; job embeddedness; job satisfaction; protean career attitudes, Gen Z

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## INTRODUCTION

Workplace incivility (WIC) has emerged as a critical focus in contemporary organizational research, representing a pervasive yet frequently underestimated threat to workplace harmony. Defined as low-intensity deviant behavior characterized by rudeness and disrespect (Andersson & Pearson, 1999), this phenomenon transcends cultural and industrial boundaries, manifesting through subtle behaviors such as dismissive gestures, condescending remarks, or deliberate exclusion. Specifically, WIC manifests in various concrete forms, such as demeaning remarks, dismissing colleagues' opinions, spreading negative gossip, general rudeness, ignoring colleagues, and making dismissive gestures, forming what is known as the incivility continuum (Sao et al. 2022). Furthermore, WIC also has consequences for organizations, including substantial human and financial costs due to high turnover intentions, such as declines in employee performance and productivity that persist (De Pater & Toh, 2024; Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, Indrawati, et al. 2023). Therefore, practitioners and researchers stress the immediate need for organizations to reduce the harmful effects of workplace incivility and to recognize contextual factors that can mitigate its adverse effects.

Empirical evidence demonstrates its global prevalence with notable cross-national variations. In the United States, a study among surgeons revealed that 92.2% experienced at least one form of incivility annually, with women and Asian American professionals reporting disproportionately higher rates (Santosa et al. 2023). Scandinavian data from Sweden showed 75% of employees experienced coworker incivility and 52% faced supervisor incivility (Torkelson et al. 2016). Developing nations exhibit particularly high prevalence, as evidenced by Indonesia's 88% reporting rate (Handoyo et al. 2018). While Japan reported a lower incidence (52.3%), this was still significantly higher than Canada's 86% in comparable studies (Tsuno et al. 2017). Middle Eastern data from Jordan revealed substantial variation (12-56%), suggesting that demographic moderators, including gender, age, and organizational tenure, significantly influence exposure risk (Sasaki et al. 2020; Tsuno et al. 2017). These findings collectively establish workplace incivility as a systemic organizational challenge, with manifestation patterns significantly mediated by cultural norms and institutional contexts.

While the detrimental effects of workplace incivility are well-documented, significant research gaps persist. Although prior studies have consistently established workplace incivility as a key antecedent of turnover intention (Alola et al. 2021; Huang & Lin, 2019; Namin et al. 2021; Tricahyadinata et al. 2020), its relationship with job embeddedness a positive psychology construct that expands beyond traditional turnover models (Crossley et al. 2007) remains underexplored. Recent studies by Achmadi et al. (2023) and Gustiawan et al. (2023) have begun addressing this gap, yet empirical evidence remains limited, and the underlying mechanisms require further investigation. For instance, Gustiawan et al. (2023) identified emotional exhaustion as a mediator in the incivility-embeddedness link, with power distance moderating this sequential pathway. Similarly, Achmadi et al. (2023) proposed an alternative model in which workplace civility enhances job embeddedness through social cohesion, contingent upon levels of work overload. In contrast to earlier studies (Achmadi et al. 2023; Gustiawan et al. 2023), this research introduces job satisfaction and protean career attitudes as factors that can elucidate both the mediating and moderating roles in the relationship between workplace incivility and job embeddedness.

This research uses moderated mediation analysis (Hayes, 2017) to examine a dynamic framework linking workplace incivility to job embeddedness via job satisfaction, with protean career attitude (PCA) as a moderating factor. Drawing on Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 2001), job satisfaction was proposed as a critical mediating mechanism that explains how incivility affects job embeddedness. Moreover, this study proposes protean career attitudes (PCA) as a critical boundary condition in the workplace incivility-job satisfaction-job embeddedness relationship based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2002). Hence, the present study provides an alternative explanation of the effect of workplace incivility on job embeddedness by integrating COR and SDT theories to develop a complex model of the relationships among variables. This research has three main objectives:

1. To empirically examine the direct link between workplace incivility and job embeddedness. While the negative effects of incivility on employees are well established (Alola et al. 2021; Gui et al. 2022; Gustiawan et al. 2023), the specific mechanisms by which it reduces job embeddedness remain unclear. This study directly responds to Gustiawan et al.'s

(2023) call for research in the hospitality sector and extends this line of inquiry across various industries. In doing so, it seeks to validate and build upon prior work by clarifying how and why experiencing incivility weakens an employee's sense of connection to their organization.

2. To investigate the moderating role of a protean career attitude (PCA). This study examines whether individuals with a self-directed, values-driven career orientation are less vulnerable to the harmful effects of workplace incivility. Specifically, it examines whether a strong PCA buffers the negative impact of incivility on job satisfaction and, consequently, on job embeddedness.
3. To provide a comprehensive framework and practical insights for human resource management. By elucidating the processes and boundary conditions of incivility's impact, this research aims to offer a clear understanding of for whom and how workplace incivility leads to reduced job embeddedness. The goal is to equip HR practitioners with valuable, actionable strategies to protect young employee retention and effectively address uncivil behavior in the workplace.

## METHODS

This study collected its primary data in February 2025 through collaborations with the alum centers of two universities in Jakarta. The research specifically targeted Generation Z alums who had graduated between 2019 and 2023. For data collection, a detailed online questionnaire was used and distributed to the selected participants via their registered email addresses. The initial sampling pool comprised 2,428 alums deemed eligible to participate in the survey. From this group, the email invitations successfully elicited a total of 824 responses. This initial turnout yielded a promising response rate of 33.9%, providing a substantial dataset for subsequent analysis.

All scales used in this study were adapted from previous studies (Cortina et al. 2001; Crossley et al. 2007; Macdonald & MacIntyre, 1997; Porter et al. 2016). Workplace incivility was measured using a 7-item scale adapted from Cortina et al. (2001) and operationalized on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (frequently). A sample item includes, "I receive negative gossip from coworkers at work." Job

embeddedness was assessed with a 7-item scale adapted from Crossley et al. (2007b), with responses anchored on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). An example item is, "I feel that this company has become part of my life." Similarly, job satisfaction was evaluated using a 10-item scale adapted from Macdonald and MacIntyre (1997), also measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). A sample item reads, "My wages are good." Protean career attitudes were assessed using a two-dimensional scale adapted from Porter et al. (2016), comprising self-directed (4 items) and values-driven (3 items) subscales. Responses were recorded on the same five-point Likert agreement scale. An example item is, "I am responsible for my success or failure in my career."

The confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated satisfactory psychometric properties across all constructs. Factor loadings ranged from .62 to .85, exceeding the recommended threshold of .50 (Hair et al. 2019), indicating strong relationships between items and their respective latent constructs. Reliability analysis revealed excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .88 to .92, surpassing the conventional .70. Convergent validity was established as all constructs achieved average variance extracted (AVE) values above .50, ranging from .50 (Protean career) to .64 (Job embeddedness). These results collectively confirm that all measures exhibit adequate reliability, convergent validity, and factorial validity, supporting their use for hypothesis testing in the current study. The powerful measurement properties of job embeddedness (factor loadings up to .85,  $\alpha = .92$ , AVE = .64) warrant special note, demonstrating exceptional psychometric quality.

Age, education, gender, and tenure were used as control variables because they have been previously shown to influence job satisfaction (Jiang et al. 2018) and job embeddedness (Hopson et al. 2018). The research employed a time-lagged design with two data collection waves separated by 2 weeks to strengthen temporal inferences and reduce potential common-method bias (Podsakoff et al. 2012). In the first wave, participants provided demographic information (gender, age, education level, and job tenure), workplace incivility, and job autonomy. This initial data collection yielded 428 complete responses, representing 52.0% of the participants who initially agreed to participate. Two

weeks later, the second wave assessed job satisfaction and embeddedness. After matching responses across both waves, the final dataset included 382 complete questionnaires, demonstrating an 89.3% retention rate from the first wave and representing 15.7% of the target population. The final sample of 382 participants provides adequate statistical power for analysis ( $\alpha = 0.05$ , power = 0.80, medium effect size  $f^2 = 0.15$ ).

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the 382 respondents. Most were male (68.1%) and held a bachelor's degree (85.9%). In terms of work experience, 47.9% had less than 2 years, 41.9% between 2 and 5 years, and 10.2% had more than 5 years. Age-wise, 53.4% were under 25, and 80.1% were unmarried. The sector distribution shows diverse industries: trade and service (30%), manufacturing (25.4%), education (24.3%), government (11.8%), and financial/banking (7.6%). A small percentage (1%) did not specify their sector.

Data analysis for this study was conducted using SmartPLS 4.0. The hypotheses were tested using a PROCESS analysis to examine the moderated mediation model (Hayes, 2017). This analytical approach allowed for a simultaneous investigation of the complex relationships in the research model. It was used to assess the role of job satisfaction as a mediator in the relationship between workplace incivility and job embeddedness. Furthermore, the analysis evaluated the function of protean career attitudes as a moderating variable, testing its capacity to buffer the effect of workplace incivility and to amplify the relationship between job satisfaction and job embeddedness. Research model examining the relationships among workplace incivility, job satisfaction, job embeddedness, and protean career attitudes in Figure 1.

Job satisfaction is the positive feeling employees get from their work experiences (Osbourne, 2015). It includes feeling accomplished in job duties and feeling respected at work (Sridharan, 2019). On the other hand, workplace incivility small actions that disrespect others can harm employee well-being and undermine organizational performance (Osbourne, 2015). Previous studies confirmed that individuals who perceive WIC have a high level of emotional exhaustion, stress, burnout, and low levels of mental health and job satisfaction (Alola et al. 2021; Gui et al. 2022; Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, Indrawati, et al. 2023). In summary, workplace incivility greatly harms

job satisfaction and the overall success of organizations. **H1:** Workplace incivility is negatively related to job satisfaction

Job embeddedness, conceptualized initially by Mitchell et al. (2001), refers to the cumulative forces that bind employees to their organizations. This multidimensional construct consists of three core elements: links, fit, and sacrifice. Links represent employees' formal and informal social connections within and beyond their workplace. Fit captures the alignment between an individual's values and skills and their organizational environment. Sacrifice reflects the material and psychological losses employees would face if they left their positions (Mitchell et al. 2001). Based on COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll et al. 2018), uncivil behaviors initiate a process of resource depletion that erodes employees' social and psychological connections to their workplace. Employees who experience incivility often withdraw from social interactions to avoid perpetrators (Peltokorpi, 2019; Peltokorpi & Ramaswami, 2021), experience weakened social cohesion, and begin to question their organizational fit as norms of mutual respect are violated (Al-Jubouri et al. 2021). These reactions directly undermine the three dimensions of embeddedness: links deteriorate as relationships are avoided, fit is compromised by value incongruence, and sacrifice diminishes as emotional investments decline (Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, & Indrawati, 2023). **H2:** Workplace incivility is positively related to job embeddedness

According to COR theory, job satisfaction enhances job embeddedness by encouraging employees to safeguard their accumulated resources (e.g., positive work relationships, career stability, emotional well-being) (Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, Indrawati, et al. 2023). Furthermore, satisfied employees are less likely to seek alternative employment because of the potential risk of losing valuable resources already acquired in the company, known as "sacrifice" in the concept of job embeddedness. Instead, they invest further in their current roles, deepening organizational ties to acquire greater resources. This link also explains why job satisfaction is consistently related to lower turnover intentions and higher engagement and commitment (Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, Indrawati, et al. 2023; Tricahyadinata et al. 2020; Turek, 2023). **H3:** Job satisfaction is positively related to job embeddedness.

Table 1. Characteristics of the study respondents based on gender, education, marital status, and sectors

| Characteristics                 | Counts | % of Total |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------|
| Gender                          |        |            |
| Female                          | 122    | 31.9 %     |
| Male                            | 260    | 68.1 %     |
| Education                       |        |            |
| Bachelor Degree                 | 328    | 85.9 %     |
| Master Degree                   | 54     | 14.1 %     |
| Tenure                          |        |            |
| < 2 yrs                         | 183    | 47.9 %     |
| 2 - 5 yrs                       | 160    | 41.9 %     |
| > 5 yrs                         | 39     | 10.2 %     |
| Age                             |        |            |
| < 25 yrs                        | 204    | 53.4 %     |
| > 25 yrs                        | 178    | 46.6 %     |
| Marital status                  |        |            |
| Single                          | 306    | 80.1 %     |
| Married                         | 76     | 19.9 %     |
| Sector                          |        |            |
| Finance and banking             | 29     | 7.6 %      |
| Trade and other service sectors | 114    | 29.8 %     |
| Manufacturing                   | 97     | 25.4 %     |
| Government                      | 45     | 11.8 %     |
| Education                       | 93     | 24.3 %     |
| N.A                             | 4      | 1.0 %      |

Beyond direct relationships, job satisfaction is a critical psychological mechanism that transforms job embeddedness into broader positive outcomes. The mediating role of job satisfaction on the relationship between workplace incivility and job embeddedness illustrates a dual function: first, job satisfaction can be a valuable resource for job embeddedness (Gustiawan, Noermijati, Aisjah, Indrawati, et al. 2023). Second, job satisfaction can amplify the mechanism that enhances the benefits of job embeddedness. This dual function aligns with the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2011), which holds that job satisfaction serves both as a protected resource and as a means of resource generation. The psychological processes underlying this mediation involve need fulfillment (SDT Theory) and resource investment (COR Theory). Satisfied, embedded employees experience (1) greater psychological need satisfaction at work, which spills over to life domains, and (2) stronger motivation to invest resources into the organization, creating a virtuous cycle of positive work behaviors and attitudes. H4: Job satisfaction mediates the link between workplace incivility and job embeddedness.

Protean career attitudes (PCA) serve as a critical psychological resource that mitigates the negative impacts of workplace incivility through multiple mechanisms grounded in career construction and self-determination theories. First, PCA satisfies the fundamental need for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000) by empowering individuals to exercise volitional control over their career paths (Briscoe et al. 2006). When addressing workplace incivility, this autonomous orientation enables employees to reframe negative experiences and apply proactive cognitive coping strategies (Yu et al. 2022), thus reducing stress responses. Second, the continuous skill development inherent in protean career management addresses SDT's competence dimension, enabling individuals to perceive workplace challenges as growth opportunities rather than threats (Chang et al. 2025). This competence reinforcement builds psychological resilience, which buffers against the detrimental effects of incivility. Third, PCA's values-driven component fulfills the need for relatedness by aligning personal values with organizational contexts (Khan et al. 2024; Siddiqui et al. 2024). Organizational support for PCA development through values-congruent policies strengthens this alignment, enhancing job embeddedness (Siddiqui et al. 2024) and psychological empowerment (Zaeri et al. 2020). This tripartite satisfaction of autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs explains PCA's stress-buffering effects, leading to higher job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hou, 2023). H5: Protean career attitudes moderate the link between (a) workplace incivility and job satisfaction, (b) workplace incivility and job embeddedness, and (c) job satisfaction and job embeddedness.

## RESULTS

### Common method bias

This study employs both procedural and statistical approaches to ensure the data are free from common method bias. Following Podsakoff et al. (2012), a time-lagged data collection method was implemented across two waves separated by two weeks to minimize potential bias. Statistically, Harman's single-factor test revealed poor model fit for a single-factor solution (RMSEA = 0.115, TLI = 0.619, 33.8% variance explained), while a four-factor model demonstrated excellent fit (RMSEA = 0.031, TLI = 0.971, 54.8% variance explained), confirming the multidimensional nature of

the constructs. These combined methodological and analytical strategies prove that common method bias does not substantially affect the study's findings.

### Descriptive statistics and correlation

Table 2 presents the correlations and descriptive statistics for the study variables. The means and standard deviations for WIC have a mean of 2.27 (SD = 1.27), SAT averages 3.69 (SD = 1.11), JE has a mean of 3.63 (SD = 1.18), and PCA average 3.74 (SD = 1.09). The correlation matrix reveals that the strongest positive relationship exists between SAT and JE ( $r = 0.49$ ), indicating that higher job satisfaction is associated with greater JE. In contrast, WIC shows negative correlations with both SAT ( $r = -0.25$ ) and JE ( $r = -0.33$ ). Additionally, SAT has a modest positive correlation with PCA ( $r = 0.29$ ). At the same time, JE and PCA show a weaker positive association ( $r = 0.18$ ). Control variables such as age, education, gender, and tenure exhibit low correlations with other variables (all  $|r| < 0.15$ ), indicating they have little influence in this context.

### Results of moderated-mediation analysis and discussion

The results in Table 3 present the findings of a moderated mediation analysis examining the effects of WIC on SAT, with PCA as a moderator (model 1). Among the control variables, only education positively affected job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $p = .02$ ), while age, gender,

and tenure did not show significant effects. The main effect of WIC was significant and negative ( $\beta = -0.24$ ,  $p < .01$ ), confirming that higher WIC is associated with lower job satisfaction. Notably, the interaction effect between PCA and WIC ( $PCA \times WIC \rightarrow SAT$ ) was significant ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that protean career attitudes moderate the relationship between workplace incivility and job satisfaction. Hence, H1 and H5a were supported..

Model 2 (JE as the dependent variable) reveals that WIC significantly reduces JE ( $\beta = -0.27$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In contrast, SAT shows a strong positive relationship with JE ( $\beta = 0.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Hence, H2 and H3 were supported. The mediation analysis (H4) also supported, reveals that WIC reduces job satisfaction significantly, which in turn lowers JE ( $\beta = -0.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ). At the same time, PCA boost job satisfaction, thereby increasing JE ( $\beta = 0.11$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The study highlights the crucial moderating role of PCA in these relationships. Employees with stronger protean career orientations experience a weaker negative impact of incivility on their job embeddedness ( $\beta = 0.36$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Simultaneously, PCA enhances the positive effect of SAT on JE ( $\beta = 0.17$ ,  $p < .01$ ), meaning employees with protean attitudes derive even greater job attachment from their satisfaction. Hence, H5a-b was supported. In addition, among control variables, only education shows a significant effect, negatively influencing embeddedness ( $\beta = -0.17$ ,  $p = .04$ ), possibly because more educated employees have greater career mobility options.

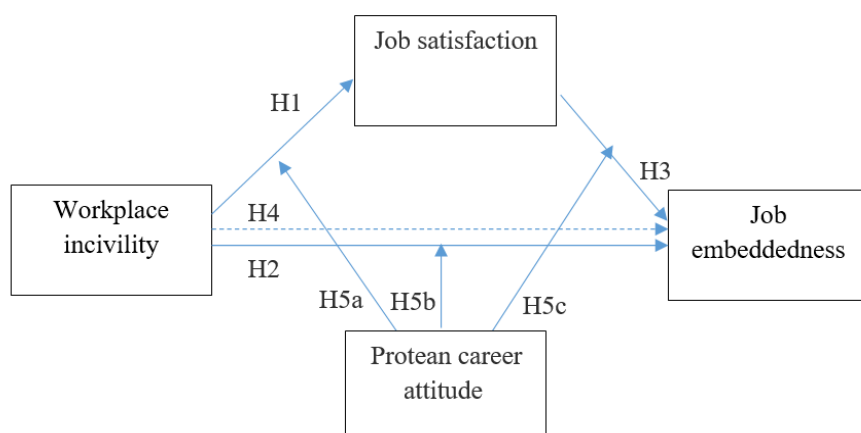


Figure 1. Research model examining the relationships among workplace incivility, job satisfaction, job embeddedness, and protean career attitudes (→ direct effect; - -> indirect effect)

Table 2. Measure correlations and descriptive statistics among variables

| Variable   | Mean | SD   | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     |
|------------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Age*       | -    | -    | 1     | 0.07  | 0.01  | 0.01  | 0.00  | 0.05  | 0.07  | -0.01 |
| Education* | -    | -    | 0.07  | 1     | 0.14  | -0.03 | -0.03 | 0.11  | 0.09  | -0.04 |
| Gender*    | -    | -    | 0.01  | 0.14  | 1     | -0.05 | -0.03 | 0.01  | -0.04 | 0.05  |
| Tenure*    | -    | -    | 0.01  | -0.03 | -0.05 | 1     | 0.02  | -0.01 | 0.05  | -0.07 |
| WIC        | 2.27 | 1.27 | 0.00  | -0.03 | -0.03 | 0.02  | 1     | -0.25 | -0.33 | 0.05  |
| SAT        | 3.69 | 1.11 | 0.05  | 0.11  | 0.01  | -0.01 | -0.25 | 1     | 0.49  | 0.29  |
| JE         | 3.63 | 1.18 | 0.07  | 0.09  | -0.04 | 0.05  | -0.33 | 0.49  | 1     | 0.18  |
| PCA        | 3.74 | 1.09 | -0.01 | -0.04 | 0.05  | -0.07 | 0.05  | 0.29  | 0.178 | 1     |

Note: \*= data categorical; WIC= Workplace incivility; SAT= Job satisfaction; JE= Job embeddedness; PCA= Protean career attitudes

Table 3. Bootstrapping results of the moderated mediation model for hypothesis testing

| Job satisfaction as DV | Coeff. | SD  | t    | P values | LLCI | ULCI |
|------------------------|--------|-----|------|----------|------|------|
| Control variable       |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| Age                    | .08    | .09 | .87  | .39      | -.11 | .26  |
| Education              | .22    | .09 | 2.33 | .02      | .03  | .39  |
| Gender                 | -.09   | .10 | .84  | .40      | -.28 | .12  |
| Tenure                 | .02    | .05 | .32  | .75      | -.09 | .11  |
| Main effect            |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| Workplace incivility   | -.24   | .05 | 4.54 | .00      | -.34 | -.13 |
| Moderating effect      |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| PCA x WIC -> SAT       | .18    | .05 | 3.34 | .00      | .07  | .28  |
| PCA -> SAT             | .28    | .05 | 5.60 | .00      | .18  | .37  |
| Job embeddedness as DV |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| Control variable       |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| Age                    | .09    | .08 | 1.12 | .26      | -.07 | .24  |
| Education              | -.17   | .08 | 2.10 | .04      | -.31 | -.01 |
| Gender                 | .07    | .04 | 1.68 | .09      | -.02 | .14  |
| Tenure                 |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| Workplace incivility   | -.27   | .05 | 5.60 | .00      | -.36 | -.17 |
| Job satisfaction       | .37    | .06 | 6.66 | .00      | .26  | .48  |
| Moderating effect      |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| PCA x WIC -> JE        | .36    | .04 | 8.65 | .00      | .27  | .44  |
| PCA x SAT -> JE        | .17    | .05 | 3.54 | .00      | .08  | .27  |
| Indirect effect        |        |     |      |          |      |      |
| WIC -> SAT -> JE       | -.09   | .03 | 3.68 | .00      | -.14 | -.05 |

Note: WIC= Workplace incivility; SAT= Job satisfaction; JE= Job embeddedness; PCA= Protean career attitudes

The conditional direct effects analysis in Table 4 shows that PCA moderates the impact of workplace incivility (WIC) on job satisfaction and job embeddedness (JE). At low PCA levels (-1 SD), WIC has a significant adverse effect on job satisfaction ( $\beta = -0.42$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Still, this impact weakens and becomes non-significant at high PCA levels (+1 SD,  $\beta = -0.06$ ,  $p > .05$ ), supporting hypothesis H5a. For JE, the negative association at low

PCA levels ( $\beta = -0.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ) diminishes and reverses to a marginally positive effect at high PCA levels ( $\beta = 0.09$ ,  $p < .10$ ), providing strong evidence for hypothesis H5b. Additionally, the relationship between job satisfaction and JE strengthens with increasing PCA, from  $\beta = 0.37$  ( $p < .01$ ) at mean PCA levels to  $\beta = 0.55$  ( $p < .01$ ) at high levels, confirming hypothesis H5c.

Table 4. Conditional direct effect based on the moderator (protean career attitudes) values

|                     | Interaction 1<br>WIC → SAT | Interaction 2<br>WIC → JE | Interaction 3<br>SAT → JE |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| PCA at Mean         | -0.24                      | -0.27                     | 0.37                      |
| PCA at +1 SD (High) | -0.06                      | 0.09                      | 0.55                      |
| PCA at -1 SD (Low)  | -0.42                      | -0.62                     | 0.20                      |

Note: WIC= Workplace incivility; SAT= Job satisfaction; JE= Job embeddedness; PCA= Protean career attitudes

The findings confirm the negative impact of incivility on job satisfaction and job embeddedness, indicating that employees experiencing incivility typically report lower job satisfaction and embeddedness, supporting the previous studies (Alola et al. 2021; Egberi, 2023; Hatmaker et al. 2024). Furthermore, this study found that the effect of workplace incivility on JE was mediated by job satisfaction, making this the first empirical study of this relationship. Specifically, this study extends Gustiawan et al. (2023), which treats emotional exhaustion as a process mechanism. This initial finding offers a more nuanced understanding of the psychological processes through which workplace incivility ultimately undermines employees' job embeddedness.

More importantly, the present study refines existing research on workplace incivility by showing that PCA mitigates its adverse effects. The findings confirmed that PCA serves as a psychological resource, buffering the impact of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and job embeddedness. In other words, individuals with strong PCA demonstrate resilience to workplace incivility. Hence, these results support previous work (Zaeri et al. 2020) by illustrating PCA's role as both a stress buffer and a satisfaction enhancer in the conceptual model in the empirical study. Specifically, PCA lessens the negative impact of incivility on job satisfaction, especially when PCA levels are high. PCA also alters how incivility relates to job embeddedness, potentially reducing its adverse effects. It also strengthens the positive association between job satisfaction and embeddedness, and this association increases with higher PCA levels. Overall, PCA serves as a coping strategy that boosts psychological empowerment and resilience at work.

### Managerial Implications

The findings underscore the need for organizations to implement systematic interventions addressing workplace incivility, given its detrimental effects on

job satisfaction and embeddedness. First, companies should develop targeted future leadership development programs (e.g., for managers and supervisors) to enhance their understanding of workplace incivility and improve their ability to address it effectively. Second, organizations should establish clear codes of ethics and guidelines that are tailored to local cultural contexts while maintaining universally applicable professional norms. Since Indonesia's sociocultural environment is diverse, companies operating in Indonesia should strike a balance between cultural specificity and overarching professional expectations to prevent the normalization of uncivil conduct. Third, the study further highlights the importance of cultivating a protean career as a resilience-building strategy against workplace challenges. Therefore, organizations need to implement structured career development programs, including improving regular skills through continuous workshops and encouraging personalized career planning as an opening step. These initiative programs should support each employee's career aspirations and align with organizational objectives while developing adaptive capabilities to navigate workplace adversities. Therefore, this program applies to all Generation Z employees in positions and organizational contexts represented in the study's sample (e.g., entry-level, junior staff, and possibly interns across different sectors in Indonesia).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

The present study demonstrates that workplace incivility undermines job embeddedness through reduced job satisfaction. At the same time, protean career attitudes serve as a critical resilience factor that buffers these adverse effects. Using a sample of 382 Gen Z employees, this study found that workplace incivility harms job satisfaction and embeddedness. The results of the mediation moderation test also confirmed that

job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workplace incivility and job embeddedness. In the same vein, PCA acts as a boundary condition, reducing the adverse effects of workplace incivility on job satisfaction and job embeddedness while strengthening the influence of job satisfaction on job embeddedness. Overall, this study supports the COR and SDT theories regarding incivility as a resource drain that depletes employees' psychological reserves. In contrast, PCA as a psychological resource can enable employees to maintain satisfaction and embeddedness despite adverse experiences. These insights advance theoretical understanding of job embeddedness dynamics while offering practical solutions for organizations to enhance employee retention through interventions that simultaneously reduce workplace incivility and develop career adaptability resources, particularly for younger Generation Z, facing challenging work environments.

### Recommendations

This study has some limitations that future research should consider. First, this study uses a cross-sectional design. This means we cannot make clear conclusions about cause-and-effect relationships between the variables. Future research should use longitudinal methods to confirm these relationships over time. Second, we relied on self-reported data from a single source, which may have affected the accuracy of our findings. Future studies should include data from multiple sources, such as supervisor ratings, and use mixed-methods designs to better understand employee experiences with incivility. Third, this study focuses on Generation Z in Indonesia, which may limit the extent to which the findings apply to other cultures and age groups. Comparative studies could address this issue.

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