



ISRIG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRIG J Edu Humanit Lit

ISSN: 2584-2544 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjehl/>

Volume – III Issue – II (March – April) 2026

Frequency: Bimonthly



WORKPLACE INCIVILITY AND GENERAL HEALTH WELL-BEING AMONG TEACHING STAFF OF HIGHER INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA.

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| Received: 11.03.2026 | Accepted: 15.03.2026 | Published: 19.03.2026

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Abstract

The study looked into the general health and well-being of teaching staff at universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education in Delta State, Nigeria, as well as workplace rudeness. It used the ex-post-facto design and the correlational approach. The inability to control the events made the ex post facto necessary. All of the teaching staff at state-owned universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education made up the study's population. One thousand three hundred (1,300) respondents—780 from universities, 260 from polytechnics, and 260 from colleges of education—were selected using the stratified random sampling technique. The "Workplace Incivility Prevalence and General Health of Higher Institutions of Learning Teaching Staff Questionnaire (WPIGHHILTSQ)" is a structured questionnaire used to collect data. After the instrument's face and content were examined, it was put through a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced $r = 0.86$. Descriptive statistics such as mean score and standard deviation were used to analyse the data in order to address research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used for hypothesis testing. The study's findings showed that teaching staff at higher education institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, have a high level of workplace incivility, that their general health and well-being are negatively impacted by workplace incivility, and Therefore, it was advised that the administrators of these higher education institutions develop and put into effect workable and practical policies that improve a friendly, healthy, and supportive work environment.

Keywords: Workplace Incivility, General Health Well-Being, Higher Institution, Learning

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are the most complicated workplace systems due to their intercultural, social, and organizational dynamics (Efayena, 2023). Given the wide diversity of staff that attend Nigeria's universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education, it is expected that the system would have persons with a range of personality types, which will surely result in personality conflicts and mild disruptive activity. According to Ahmed (2023), academia and higher education institutions are often the sites of uncivil behaviour, sometimes referred to as incivility. Clark (2017), Devi & Eid (2020), and Efayena & Awiry (2025) Consider workplace incivility as a range of impolite, disrespectful, or violent behaviour that could make the individuals involved feel physically or psychologically uncomfortable. Therefore, workplace incivility is conceptualized as rude, disrespectful, or insensitive behaviour that may violate workplace norms of respect. Because of the unique dynamics of these settings, which include interactions between teachers, staff, and students, incivility can have a substantial influence on both the academic environment and the general well-being of persons in higher education institutions (Akinyoade and Oye 2020). Incivility in higher education institutions can take many various forms and affects the academic environment, staff relations, student relationships, and overall institutional productivity. The problem, which is typified by rude, disruptive, and disrespectful attitude, is growing more prevalent in both administrative and academic contexts. Numerous studies have shown that workplace rudeness, which is prevalent in higher education institutions, has an impact on a significant number of teaching staff and students. A research by Schilpzand et al. (2016) found that over 60% of faculty members reported experiencing rudeness in their interactions with colleagues. Similarly, a survey conducted by Yaranon et al. (2025) revealed that 49% of academic staff reported rudeness from students, while 28% of academic staff acknowledged being unpleasant to their peers. The perception of a toxic environment also has an impact on the frequency of rudeness, which is not limited to in-person interactions. Workplace incivility, which is defined as low-intensity aberrant behaviour with uncertain intent to harm the target, has become a major issue in many professional contexts, including educational institutions. Efayena & Steve (2026) reported high rate of incivility among teaching staff of higher institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. Research on the impact of workplace rudeness on employees' health is well-established globally, and in the context of Nigerian higher education institutions, this topic has received more attention in recent years. In respect to the general health of Nigerian academic staff, this review looks at the prevalence, effects, and mitigating strategies of workplace rudeness. Examples of workplace incivility include coworkers who behave impolitely, disrespectfully, or dismissively (Andersson and Pearson, 1999). Interactions between students, teachers, and staff in an academic setting may reflect this. The school environment frequently involves competition, which may exacerbate rudeness (Miller, 2020). According to a nationwide survey by Gerten and McKinney (2020), over half of faculty members claimed that rudeness had become a normal aspect of their workplace culture. Furthermore, rudeness is widespread in Nigerian higher education institutions, according to Ehibor & Idubor (2023). Agbaje et al. (2021) reported that up to 72% of university personnel had WPI on average. These figures demonstrate the startling frequency of rudeness in higher education and show that it is an ongoing issue that institutions must address.

General health refers to an individual's overall state of social, mental, and physical well-being. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), health is more than just the absence of disease; it is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being (WHO, 2018). Staff health in academic settings can affect instructional effectiveness, student learning experiences, and research production (Mello, 2021). It is well established that being impolite at work is linked to poorer overall health. Numerous health issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout, have been linked to rudeness, according to studies by (Porath & Erez, 2007; Yang et al., 2016). According to some research, high levels of stress brought on by rudeness at work can have detrimental effects on physical health, leading to ailments like decreased immunity and cardiovascular problems (Schilpzand et al., 2016). A research done in Nigeria by Nwachukwu and Okafor (2021) and corroborated by Jamal and Siddiqui (2020), academic staff members who reported being more impolite also displayed greater indicators of stress and worry, which had a detrimental impact on their physical and mental health. The research indicates that rudeness creates a poisonous work environment, which reduces employee satisfaction and overall well-being.

Numerous factors moderate the relationship between rudeness at work and health. Reducing the detrimental effects of rudeness requires the organization's support. Collegial relationships and encouraging leadership could lessen the negative impacts of rudeness and promote resilience among academic personnel (Kalu, 2022). Additionally, by employing personal coping strategies including emotional management and social support outside of work, employees can mitigate the detrimental impacts of rudeness (Obi et al., 2020, & Efayena, 2025). Also, companies that foster a cooperative and courteous culture are likely to witness a decline in rudeness and an improvement in their workers' general well-being (Duncan & O'Neill, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Academic staff members in Nigeria's universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education frequently experience a range of rudeness, including dismissive behaviour, impolite encounters, and a lack of peer support. In addition to decreasing job happiness and productivity, these negative workplace dynamics may put academic staff members' general health and well-being in grave danger. Despite the crucial link between the office environment and health outcomes, there doesn't appear to be any research looking at the specific relationship between workplace rudeness and the general health levels of academic staff in Nigeria, irrespective of the observed escalating health issues among teaching staff of higher education institutions in Nigeria. Since most of the study to date has focused on the effects of rudeness in corporate settings, there is a knowledge gap about how incivility displays and impacts health outcomes in the specific context of academia. Given the growing concerns about mental health difficulties among educators, it is critical to examine how instances of uncivil behaviour may worsen stress, anxiety, and other health-related issues faced by academic workers. Thus, the goal of this study is to look at the relationship between workplace rudeness and the overall health of academic staff in Nigerian higher education institutions. By identifying the degree to which rudeness interacts with various health markers, the research will provide significant insights that can direct policy recommendations targeted at promoting a more supportive and healthful work environment for academia. This information is crucial for enhancing faculty

members' overall wellbeing, which would eventually enhance Nigeria's educational system.

Research Questions

- 1 What is the prevalence level of workplace incivility as experienced by teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta, Nigeria?
- 2 What is the general health level of teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

- 1 Workplace incivility does not significantly negatively impact the general health of teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, this study aims to examine workplace incivility and general health rates among academic staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically, it aims to:

- I. ascertain the prevalence level of workplace incivility as experienced by teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria,
- II. determine the general health level of teaching staff of higher institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, and
- III. find out whether workplace incivility does significantly negatively impact the general health of teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to look into the overall health and workplace rudeness rates of teaching staff in higher education institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. As a result, it uses the ex-post-facto design and the correlational method. Because the events cannot be altered or controlled because they have already happened, the ex-post-facto becomes required. All teaching personnel in state-owned universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education in Delta State make up the study's population. One thousand three hundred (1,300) respondents were selected using the stratified random sample technique: 780 from universities, 260 from polytechnics, and 260 from colleges of education. "Workplace Incivility Prevalence and General Health of Higher Institutions of Learning Teaching Staff Questionnaire (WPIGHHILTSQ)" structured questionnaire was used to gather data. The instrument's face and content were examined for validity, and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced $r = 0.86$. Descriptive statistics of mean score and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for hypothesis testing.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: what is the prevalence level of workplace incivility as experienced by teaching staff of Delta State higher institutions of learning?

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation on the Prevalence Level of Workplace Incivility as Experienced by Teaching Staff of Higher Institutions in Delta State, Nigeria.

S/N	INCIVILITY PREVALENCE LEVEL ITEMS: the degree at which someone	MEAN	SD	DECISION
1	Ignored or dismissed my ideas is	3.35	0.71	High
2	Treated you condescendingly or talked down is	3.08	0.76	High
3	Made derogatory comments about you is	3.23	0.72	High
4	Interrupted you is	3.15	0.72	High
5	Displayed blatant disrespect for you is	3.19	0.84	High
6	You were excluded from important meetings is	3.03	0.83	High
7	Failed to respond to your request is	3.13	0.73	High
8	Left out of social gatherings is	3.36	0.68	High
9	Yelled at you	2.98	0.65	High
10	Used profanity when speaking to you is	3.31	0.79	High
11	Subjected you to sarcastic comments is	3.01	0.81	High
12	Made threatening state to	3.00	0.89	High
13	Subject you to unwanted physical contact is	2.44	1.04	Low
14	Invaded your personal space is	2.47	1.01	Low
15	You were exposed to unhealthy working conditions is	2.58	0.89	High
16	Gave you silent treatment is	2.49	1.03	Low
17	Subject you to subtle insults is	3.13	0.85	High
18	Treated you unfairly is	2.69	1.07	High
19	Sabotage your work is	3.10	0.94	High
20	Used their position to intimidate you is	2.82	0.92	High
	GRAND MEAN/SD	2.98	0.85	

The result of table one 1 above indicates that items 1 – 12, 15 and 17- 20 with mean range of 2.58 to 3.36 which are above the cut off mark of 2.50 and above as high prevalence level of work place incivility as experienced by higher institutions teaching staff. However items 13, 14 and 16 recorded low level.

Research Questions 2: What is the general health level of teaching staff of higher institutions in Delta State, Nigeria?

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of the General Health Level of among Teaching Staff of Higher Institutions Learning in Delta State, Nigeria.

	GENERAL HEALTH; the degree	MEAN	STD	DECISION
1	I feel drained from my work	2.69	1.04	High
2	I feel fatigue from work when I wake up in the morning	3.31	0.76	High
3	At which I feel exhausted	2.95	0.85	High
4	Of burnout is	3.17	0.92	High
5	Of feeling of over worked	2.71	0.98	High
6	Of my cynical feeling about people resulting from my work	3.08	0.79	High
7	Of detachment from others	2.85	0.88	High
8	Of my feeling of loss of touch with my job	3.00	0.75	High
9	Of feeling of lost pf touch with my feelings	3.22	0.75	High
	GRAND MEAN/STD	3.00	0.86	High

The result of table 2 shows that all the items on general health level of teaching staff of higher institutions of learning in Delta State, Nigeria, has a mean and grand mean scores above the cut off mark of 2.50. this implies that the general health level of teaching staff of higher institutions of learning is generally high.

L.I:Hypothesis: 1 Workplace incivility does not significantly negatively impact teaching staff of higher institutions of learning general health.

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient on Workplace Incivility and Teaching Staff of Higher Institutions of Learning General Health.

Variable	N	R	Sig(2 tailed)	–
Workplace Incivility Prevalence	1300	0.305	0.000	
Staff General Health				

The result in table 14 shows the r- value of 0.305 and a P- value of 0.000. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the P- value of 0.000 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that incivility significantly negatively impact teaching staff of higher institutions of learning general health.

Discussion of Results

According to the survey's findings, academic staff members at Delta State's higher education institutions frequently engage in rude behaviour at work. This shows that incivility among teaching staff in these institutions was not only evident (common), but also high. Examples of incivility as revealed by the study include

ignoring or dismissing ideas, being treated condescendingly or talked down to, making disparaging remarks about, interrupting, displaying blatant disrespect for one another, being excluded from important meetings, being left out of social gatherings, being yelled at, using profanity when spoken to, failing to respond to requests, being threatened, being subjected to unwanted physical contact, being treated unfairly, having work sabotaged, being intimidated with positions, etc. These findings were in line with those of Schilpzand et al. (2016) and Efayena & Steve (2026) who found that over 60% of faculty members reported experiencing rudeness from colleagues. Similarly, a survey conducted by Yaranon et al. (2025) revealed that 49% of academic staff members said they were disrespectful to students and 28% said they were rude to their peers. The perception of an offensive environment has an impact on the frequency of rudeness, which is not limited to in-person interactions. The results of the current study also support those of Agbaje et al. (2021) and Gerten and McKinney (2020). Agbaje et al. (2021) reported a high prevalence of incivility among university staff, with an average of 72%; Gerten and McKinney (2020) found that more than 50% of faculty reported that incivility had become a normalised aspect of their workplace culture; and Ehibor & Idubor (2023) noted that uncivil behaviour is widespread among higher institutions in Nigeria.

This study found that overall health and well-being of teaching staff in higher institutions of learning are quite low. This is linked to the respondents' high reports of the detrimental effects of their jobs on their general well-being, including burnout, feeling overworked, cynical, detachment, losing touch with family and other people, returning from work late, and waking up exhausted even in the morning. This is consistent with research by Porath & Erez (2007) that showed that being treated rudely can result in a number of health problems, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout. The results of the current study also support those of Yang et al. (2016) and Schilpzand et al. (2016), who discovered that workplace rudeness, contributed to elevated stress levels, which in turn had a negative impact on physical health and resulted in problems including weakened immunity and cardiovascular illnesses. The present study is consistent with that conducted by Nwachukwu and Okafor (2021) Jamal and Siddiqui (2020), who discovered that academic staff members who reported higher levels of rudeness also showed more signs of tension and anxiety, which had a negative effect on their mental and physical well-being. According to Duncan & O'Neill (2020), companies that foster a culture of mutual respect and cooperation are likely to see a decrease in rudeness and an improvement in the general well-being of their employees. As a result, it is critical to draw the conclusion from these findings that workplace incivility has serious consequences for employees' general health and wellbeing.

Conclusion

The results of the survey clearly show that teaching staff in higher education institutions in Delta State, Nigeria, have a high degree of workplace incivility in addition to a high percentage of negative/poor overall health and well-being. Similarly, it was demonstrated that rudeness has a significant negative impact on the overall health and well-being of the teaching staff in academic higher education institutions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended.

1. The administrators of these higher education institutions should develop and put into effect workable rules that improve a friendly, healthy, and supportive work environment.
2. These higher education institutions' administrations ought to train their employees in inclusiveness, diversity, and friendly work ethics so they can identify and deal with rudeness.

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