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They were uncivil, and now I am too: A dual process model exploring relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility

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Abstract

Incivility from customers is a common occurrence for employees working in service-oriented organizations. Typically, such incivility engenders instigated mistreatment, both towards customers and colleagues. Not much is understood, however, about the mechanisms underlying the relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility. Answering recent calls from incivility scholars, the present research, drawing from Self-Regulatory Resource Theory and Stressor-Emotion models of workplace behaviour, explored cognitive (i.e., self-regulatory resource depletion) and affective (i.e., negative affect) pathways that would explain relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility towards others. Through two multi-wave studies with different time lags ($N_1 = 180$, weekly lags; $N_2 = 192$, within-week lags) and different operationalizations of the instigated incivility construct (i.e., broad [unidimensional] and narrow [multidimensional]), we find consistent support for the mediating effects of the affective pathway. While our first study finds that customer incivility is linked to broad instigated incivility through negative affect, our second study finds that customer incivility is linked to, more specifically, gossip, exclusionary behaviour, and hostility through negative affect. In both studies, however, no support was found for the mediating effects of the cognitive pathway. Implications for both research and practice are discussed, and future research directions are offered.

KEYWORDS

customer incivility, depletion, instigated incivility, negative affect

1 | INTRODUCTION

Subtle forms of mistreatment at work have long attracted the attention of organizational scholars. This research tends to focus on *incivility* at work, defined by Andersson and Pearson (1999) as “low-

intensity deviant behaviour with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect. Uncivil behaviours are characteristically rude and discourteous, displaying a lack of regard for others” (p. 457). These behaviours are distinct from other, more overt forms of mistreatment, such as aggressive

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behaviour (e.g., threatening someone verbally or physically) or abusive leadership (e.g., public humiliation from supervisors), as such mistreatment possesses clear and salient intent to harm targets. Notably, though, incivility tends to exert a unique influence beyond such forms of overt mistreatment (Yao et al., 2022) in the prediction of negative outcomes. Findings from Yao et al. (2022) and others (e.g., Chris et al., 2022) help illustrate the deleterious impact of coworker incivility.

Of particular importance for organizations providing services is incivility from customers. Customer incivility, which concerns the low intensity behaviours from customers possessing ambiguous intent to harm employees, can take many forms. For example, a customer may blame the employee for a problem they did not cause or address the employee in inappropriate ways (e.g., "Hey you!"; Wilson & Holm-vall, 2013). Unfortunately, incivility from customers is a common occurrence for service-oriented employees (Grandey et al., 2007), relating to a variety of deleterious consequences, such as emotional exhaustion, turnover intentions, and negative affect for those routinely exposed (Arnold & Walsh, 2015; Han et al., 2016; Sliter et al., 2010).

A key assumption underlying the study of workplace incivility is the notion that "incivility begets incivility." Specifically, Andersson and Pearson (1999) proposed a spiralling effect of workplace incivility, such that recipients of incivility are likely to then perpetrate incivility themselves. In support of this notion, reciprocal relations of incivility have been observed in numerous contexts, such as relations between experienced and instigated incivility towards colleagues (e.g., Rosen et al., 2016; Welbourne et al., 2020) as well as relations between experienced and instigated incivility towards customers (e.g., van Jaarsveld et al., 2010; Walker et al., 2017). Cross-source incivility relations have also been observed, such as relations between experienced customer incivility and instigated colleague incivility (e.g., Kim & Qu, 2019). Indeed, the impacts of customer incivility are far reaching, with seemingly all parties at risk of experiencing incivility from those who experience such exchanges.

Throughout much of the experienced–instigated incivility literature, though, scholars have largely focussed on boundary conditions of these relations and have spent less time exploring the various mechanisms through which incivility relates to such retaliatory behaviour (Yao et al., 2022). This holds especially true for customer incivility as well. To date, little is understood about *why* customer incivility would result in instigated incivility, and even less is known about the relations that various forms of instigated incivility (e.g., hostility, privacy invasion, Gray et al., 2017) may share with customer incivility. Does customer incivility make employees angry, thus resulting in incivility as a way of dealing with those emotions? Does customer incivility contribute to instigated incivility through a lack of self-control on the part of the employee? There is empirical support for both perspectives in the colleague incivility literature (e.g., Rosen et al., 2016; Su et al., 2022), but these perspectives remain untested in the customer incivility literature.

The present research aims to address this knowledge gap by assessing the mechanisms underlying the relations between

customer incivility and instigated incivility. Drawing primarily from stressor-emotion models of workplace behaviour (e.g., Spector & Fox, 2002) and self-regulatory resource theory (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1998), we conducted two studies to explore the importance of two separate pathways in predicting instigated incivility in response to customer incivility: an affective pathway (negative affect) and a cognitive pathway (self-regulatory resource depletion). First, we establish the role that these pathways possess in explaining relations between customer and broad (i.e., unidimensional) instigated incivility. Then, we investigate how these paths may explain specific, or narrow (i.e., multidimensional), instigated incivility relations with customer incivility. We suggest that more reflexive or mean-spirited forms of incivility (i.e., hostility, exclusionary behaviour) may result from the negative emotions customer incivility causes, while more "acceptable" or covert forms of incivility (i.e., gossip, privacy invasion) may stem from a lack of self-control.

This research has implications for the literature on workplace incivility, namely customer incivility. Perhaps most importantly, we explore two mediating pathways (affective and cognitive) between customer incivility and instigated incivility. This builds upon past research, which has found these pathways to explain the relations between customer incivility and non-incivility outcomes (e.g., Cheng et al., 2020; Yue et al., 2022). Moreover, this research answers recent calls from scholars who note that further exploration of the underlying mechanisms of incivility is warranted (Yao et al., 2022). Moving forward, we describe the dual mechanisms that may link customer incivility to instigated incivility, beginning with a broad perspective (Study 1) before shifting to a more specific conceptualization of the instigated incivility construct (Study 2).

1.1 | Customer incivility: Affective and cognitive pathways to instigated incivility

Customer incivility is an exchange that scholars would unanimously agree contributes to strain (e.g., Wang et al., 2022). How, though, does such incivility contribute to instigated incivility? Currently in the extant incivility literature, there are numerous pathways that have received empirical support. Scholars such as Rosen et al. (2016) have found support for a cognitive pathway explaining the relations between experienced colleague incivility and instigated incivility, such that experiencing incivility would deplete the finite amount of self-regulatory resources possessed by employees (Baumeister et al., 1998). This depletion contributes to a lack of self-control, often resulting in difficulty regulating one's behaviour to comply with social norms (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007), and potentially leading to engagement in behaviours that would restore these lost resources of control (Yam et al., 2014). Instigated incivility could perhaps be seen as a way to regain control over one's surroundings amid ongoing stressor-induced self-regulatory resource depletion.

Other scholars, such as Su et al. (2022), have found that negative affect plays an important role in facilitating coworker incivility dynamics. The authors found, using latent change score modelling, that

dynamic incivility change was facilitated primarily by negative affect, over and above other paths—including a cognitive path. This affective perspective sees instigated incivility resulting from experienced incivility more in line with stressor-emotion models of workplace deviance (Spector & Fox, 2002).

We suggest, combining these streams of research, that customer incivility relates to instigated incivility through *both* paths. Moving forward, we detail the role of these paths and how they may link customer incivility to different operationalizations of the instigated incivility construct.

1.1.1 | Instigated incivility: Broad and narrow

Before detailing the role of both affective and cognitive pathways in the customer incivility—instigated incivility process, it is informative to delineate the difference between broad and narrow conceptualizations of the instigated incivility construct. Most studies on instigated incivility take a broad approach to the construct (e.g., Welbourne et al., 2020), wherein instigated incivility is unidimensional. That is, all possible behaviours that could fall under the umbrella of incivility from a perpetrator's perspective are subsumed into one variable. While this approach has been informative for theory and practice surrounding incivility, there are also narrower, or more specific, approaches to the construct. Most notably, Gray et al. (2017) validated a 4-factor measure of incivility from the perpetrator's perspective, consisting of hostility (low level aggression, e.g., using an improper tone), exclusionary behaviour (behaviour that makes another feel left out, e.g., failing to remind them of a time sensitive event), privacy invasion (viewing or taking private information from another, e.g., looking through their belongings), and gossip (spreading harmful or untruthful information about another, e.g., talking behind another's back). These behaviours, though all uncivil, are all different in modality—and may stem from different mechanisms.

Moving forward, we detail the anticipatory roles of both affective (i.e., negative affect) and cognitive (i.e., self-regulatory resource depletion) pathways in linking customer incivility to both broad (i.e., unidimensional) and narrow (i.e., hostility, exclusionary behaviour, privacy invasion, gossip) conceptualizations of instigated incivility. We begin by discussing the instigated incivility construct from a broad perspective, before shifting to a more specific, or narrow, perspective.

1.2 | Affective pathway and broad instigated incivility

Negative affect has long been discussed as a mechanism through which stressors lead to harmful behaviour. As it pertains to workplace behaviour, the stressor-emotion model of voluntary workplace behaviour proposed by Spector and Fox (2002) is a well-supported model (e.g., Fida et al., 2015; Rupperecht et al., 2016) that works to explain the relations between stressors, negative affect, and

employee deviance. The model suggests that stressors, such as experienced mistreatment, work to make recipients feel angry, frustrated, sad, and so on. These discrete emotions consequently contribute to behavioural dysregulation and a tendency to engage in behaviour that would help “even the score”.

Uncivil treatment from customers is likely to make recipients feel emotions such as frustration, anger, and shame. Uncivil treatment constitutes interactional injustice (i.e., perceived unfair interpersonal treatment when enacting organizational procedures; Colquitt, 2001), which has been shown to lead to such emotions (e.g., Skarlicki & Folger, 1997). Uncivil behaviour from customers may thus represent an attack on oneself (e.g., “is there something about me the customer does not like?”), resulting in negative affect.

Drawing from the stressor-emotion model of voluntary behaviour (Spector & Fox, 2002), we suggest that these negative emotions will act as a mechanism between experiencing incivility from customers and instigating incivility. Indeed, such negative emotions have been shown to link work stressors to displaced aggression and hostility (e.g., Balducci et al., 2011). Thus, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1 *Customer incivility is associated with higher levels of negative affect.*

Hypothesis 2 *Negative affect will mediate the positive relation between customer incivility and instigated incivility.*

1.3 | Cognitive pathway and broad instigated incivility

Self-regulatory resources—a cognitive resource that has been examined in tandem with experienced incivility from colleagues (e.g., Rosen et al., 2016)—are necessary for maintaining purposeful control over one's behaviour (Baumeister et al., 1998). Research has supported the notion that the possession of these resources contributes to desirable outcomes, such as the ability to suppress and move past unpleasant emotional episodes (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). These resources are likely to be of heightened importance for service-oriented employees, due to the exchange-based nature of their work and the salient social norms present in the service industry (e.g., “the customer is always right!”, Bishop & Hoel, 2008).

The expected response to customer incivility is likely to be particularly important for employee self-regulatory resources. When encountering incivility from customers, employees will have to expend such resources to refrain from retaliating at the customer, comply with customer-employee social norms, and respond in a way that is respectful, polite, and informative. Engaging in this response, though, likely drains the finite amount of self-regulatory resources possessed by that employee. Indeed, these resources have been found to be particularly sensitive to aspects of self-presentation (e.g., Vohs et al., 2005). As self-regulatory resources become drained,

people begin to lose their ability to constrain and direct their behaviour as is appropriate (Baumeister et al., 1998).

When employees who encounter customer incivility begin experiencing self-regulatory resource depletion, they may be more likely to instigate incivility towards others. Indeed, people experiencing self-regulatory resource depletion are likely to meet draining stimuli—which may populate service settings (e.g., needy customers or colleagues)—with aggression (Robinson et al., 2010), perhaps in an attempt to halt further resource loss. Thus, we propose:

Hypothesis 3 *Customer incivility is associated with higher levels of self-regulatory resource depletion.*

Hypothesis 4 *Self-regulatory resource depletion will mediate the positive relation between customer incivility and instigated incivility.*

Having proposed that customer incivility will contribute to broad instigated incivility via negative affect (i.e., affective pathway) and self-regulatory resource depletion (i.e., cognitive pathway), we turn now to a discussion on which specific forms of instigated incivility (i.e., a narrow approach), drawing from the work of Gray et al. (2017), may result from these two pathways.

1.4 | Affective pathway and specific forms of instigated incivility

According to the stressor-emotion model of workplace behaviour, negative affect contributes to behavioural dysregulation. This leads to deviant, reactionary behaviour, such as interpersonal sabotage (e.g., setting someone up for failure) or hostility. More broadly, interdisciplinary research has found that, in addition to impulsive, reactionary behaviour (e.g., Selby et al., 2016), negative emotions may contribute to more systematic or “thought out” forms of mistreatment, such as knowledge hiding (e.g., Zhao & Xia, 2019). Building from this research, we suggest that negative affect engendered from uncivil customer exchanges leads to hostility and exclusionary behaviours.

Hostile behaviours, such as rolling one's eyes or using an inappropriate tone, may be a quick, reflexive response to uncivil treatment from customers—one that would be easy to do if in a state of behavioural dysregulation (Spector & Fox, 2002). Indeed, those experiencing negative affect tend to display such affect in their body language and facial cues (Adolphs, 2002). In instances of uncivil customer mistreatment, those who experience negative affect may—without thinking—respond to such incivility with an inappropriate tone or a dirty look. Exclusionary behaviours on the other hand, such as failing to pass on key information to another or purposefully being slow when someone needs you, may also stem from such negative affect. Such behaviour may be viewed as cathartic to those experiencing such affect (Bushman et al., 2001)—a way to have others experience the negativity that they are feeling, helping them move past their emotional state. For example, someone who is made angry or upset by an uncivil customer exchange may take the opportunity

to be (cathartically) cruel to a colleague and fail to inform them of a mandatory meeting they are unaware of/confused about. Indeed, negative affect has been linked to ostracizing acts of mistreatment (e.g., playing mean pranks on others, playing dumb when colleagues need information, e.g., Krishnakumar et al., 2017; Zhao et al., 2019). Altogether, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 5 *Negative affect will mediate the relations between customer incivility and (a) hostility and (b) exclusionary behaviour.*

1.5 | Cognitive pathway and specific forms of instigated incivility

When experiencing self-regulatory resource depletion, self-regulatory theory suggests that people may begin to engage in deviant or harmful behaviours (Baumeister et al., 1998)—and may do so indiscriminately (Bushman, 2002). This is because those lacking in self-regulatory resources will be looking to regain feelings of control (Dupré et al., 2005), with mistreatment being one potential way to do so (Shoss et al., 2016). It is important to note, though, that only certain kinds of deviant behaviour may stem from such depletion. Yam et al. (2014), through three studies, drawing from theories of social consensus (i.e., “the degree of social agreement that a proposed act is evil (or good)”, Jones, 1991, p. 375), found that participants experiencing self-regulatory resource depletion tended to engage in deviant behaviours of a *lower social consensus* (i.e., behaviours that involve more disagreement about their unethicity, e.g., withdrawing from work/relaxing citizenship behaviour, Green, 2022; Kruse, 2022) and often refrained from engagement in behaviour of a *higher social consensus* (i.e., behaviours that are socially agreed upon as being particularly immoral, e.g., workplace sexual harassment, see legislation such as the National Commission to Combat Workplace National Commission to Combat Workplace Sexual Harassment Act no. HR5052, 2021).

Based on these findings, we suggest that the self-regulatory resource depletion that likely follows uncivil exchanges with customers will contribute to engagement in both privacy invasion and gossiping behaviours. Both behaviours may be instrumental in acquiring desired resources of control often sought by those experiencing a lack of self-regulatory resources (Baumeister & Alquist, 2009). More importantly, though, these behaviours may be easier for perpetrators to get away with or explain away because of lower social consensus; thus, they may be more desirable for those experiencing depletion-related fatigue and seeking control resources, as they can avoid creating a situation that would result in more lost resources (Yam et al., 2014). Indeed, gossip may be an ideal resource restoration strategy as such behaviour is often ubiquitous in workplaces rife with exchanges (e.g., customer service settings), and may be more acceptable among work groups (Dunbar, 2004; Dunbar et al., 1997). Gossip allows one to spread negative information about others in a way they see fit; the gossiper controls the narratives they wish to share with others. Thus, gossiping is likely restorative for

lost resources by providing gossipers with feelings of control and power. Privacy invasion, meanwhile, is too likely a behaviour of low social consensus. These behaviours are often covert (e.g., looking at someone's documents when they are not around) or low intensity (e.g., interrupting someone while they are on the phone), and would likely be easy to explain away if questioned (e.g., "I didn't realize you were talking to someone!"). Indeed, scholars assessing self-regulatory resource depletion dynamics have found behaviours adjacent to privacy invasion (e.g., dishonesty, Gotlib & Converse, 2010) to be actions people experiencing such states lean into—demonstrating their instrumentality to those lacking in self-control resources. Like gossiping, privacy invasion behaviours may grant feelings of control and power; for example, interrupting another while they are speaking has been positioned in the communications literature as a display of dominance (e.g., Goldberg, 1990)—one that we position may grant desired resources. Moreover, acts of theft that help constitute the privacy invasion construct have been shown to grant control resources to those feeling depleted (Shoss et al., 2016). Altogether, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 6 *Self-regulatory resource depletion will mediate the relations between customer incivility and (a) gossip and (b) privacy invasion.*

2 | OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We conducted two studies, with our methodologies differing slightly between each. Study 1, focussed on customer incivility and broad instigated incivility, used a time-lagged three timepoint design, with each measurement occasion separated by 1 week. Study 2, focussed on customer incivility and specific forms (i.e., a narrow conceptualization) of instigated incivility, used a time-lagged four timepoint design, with measurement occasions spanning the course of a 5-day work week. Structural equation modelling was used to test our hypotheses.

3 | STUDY 1 METHOD

3.1 | Participants and procedure

We recruited 761 employees from the hospitality industry using Prolific Academic (e.g., Grandey et al., 2021) to participate in a screening survey for this study. This screener gauged eligibility for participation in three weekly surveys. To be eligible for participation in these surveys, respondents had to note in our screener that they were (a) at least 18 years of age, (b) could read and write in English, (c) resided in the United States, (d) worked at least 20 h per week, and (e) interacted with at least five customers each day at work. In our screener we also collected basic demographic information (i.e., gender, race, age, hours worked per week, job family). Using our screener, we identified and invited 278 eligible respondents for

participation. Customer incivility was measured 1 week after the screener survey (Time 1), negative affect and self-regulatory resource depletion were measured the next week (Time 2), and instigated incivility was measured the week after that (Time 3). Only those who completed the prior survey(s) were invited for the next. Participants were paid \$22.50 for completion of all surveys. We had an attrition rate of 35.3% from Times 1 to 3, resulting in a final sample of 180 employees. The sample was primarily female (68.5%) and White (80.2%), had an average age of 31.23 years ($SD = 11.50$), and worked an average of 36.81 h per week ($SD = 10.17$). The top occupational sectors reported in our sample were the food/beverage sector (74.7%), followed by lodging/resorts (15.4%) and theme parks/attractions (3.8%).

3.2 | Measures

Participants were asked to recall each construct in a general sense.

3.2.1 | Customer incivility

Customer incivility ($\alpha = 0.94$) was assessed using the 10-item measure from Wilson and Holmvall (2013). Items were rated on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 5 = *Strongly Agree*). An example item was: "[Customers at work...]" Make inappropriate gestures to get my attention (e.g., snapping fingers)".

3.2.2 | Self-regulatory resource depletion

Self-regulatory resource depletion was assessed ($\alpha = 0.94$) using 5-items from the State Self-Control Capacity measure (Twenge et al., 2004); these 5 items were validated by Johnson et al. (2014). Items were rated on a 1 to 7 scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 7 = *Strongly agree*). An example item was: "[Please indicate the extent to which you have felt each way lately] I feel drained".

3.2.3 | Negative affect

Negative affect ($\alpha = 0.90$) was assessed using the 5-item measure from Mackinnon et al. (1999). Items, which were various negative emotions, were rated on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = *Not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*), and an example emotion was: "[To what degree have you felt the below emotions lately] Upset".

3.2.4 | Instigated incivility

Instigated incivility ($\alpha = 0.92$) was assessed using the 7-item instigated incivility measure from Blau and Andersson (2005). Items were rated on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = *Never*, 5 = *Many times*), and an example

item was: “[Reflecting on your recent work experiences, to what extent have you engaged in each of these behaviours] Addressed someone inappropriately either publicly or privately”.

4 | STUDY 1 RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations between focal variables in this study can be found in Table 1.

4.1 | Measurement modelling

We assessed the fit of our four-factor measurement model, using diagonally weighted least squares estimation (DWLS), consisting of customer incivility (predictor), self-regulatory resource depletion and negative affect (mediators), and instigated incivility (outcome). For this study (and Study 2), we opted to use DWLS when estimating both our measurement and structural models. DWLS has been shown to be optimal when dealing with small samples and non-normal data (e.g., Hox et al., 2010; Rhemtulla et al., 2012). Indeed, mistreatment variables such as instigated incivility tend to violate the assumption of normality (Beck et al., 2014; Griep et al., 2016; Lavelle et al., 2018); DWLS tends to outperform other estimation methods, such as Maximum Likelihood, in these instances (e.g., Mindrila, 2010). This model showed close fit: $\chi^2(318) = 136.36$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.06. We then compared this model to a three-factor model that combined our mediators ($\chi^2(321) = 251.57$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.08). This model fit worse than our intended model: $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 115.21$, $p < 0.01$. These results help provide construct validity evidence for our variables prior to structural modelling.

4.2 | Structural modelling

We conducted fully latent SEM using the lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2012). With customer incivility as our predictor, self-regulatory resource depletion and negative affect as our mediators, and instigated incivility as our outcome, our structural model (see Figure 1), estimated using DWLS, demonstrated acceptable fit: $\chi^2(293) = 126.29$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.06. In our model, we allowed the residual terms of negative affect and self-regulatory resource depletion to covary, as they likely capture conceptually similar reactions to uncivil behaviours from customers. This practice is recommended by scholars (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

Direct effects between customer incivility and depletion ($\beta = 0.46$, $p < 0.01$) and negative affect ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) were observed, supporting Hypotheses 1 and 3. Direct effects from negative affect ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) to instigated incivility were observed, but *not* from self-regulatory resource depletion to instigated incivility ($\beta = 0.04$, $p = 0.31$). Moreover, direct effects from customer incivility to instigated incivility were observed ($\beta = 0.13$, $p < 0.01$). Following recommendations from Preacher and Selig (2012), we used the Monte Carlo method with 20,000 replications to calculate the 95% confidence intervals for our indirect effects. Significant indirect effects from customer incivility to instigated incivility through negative affect ($\beta = 0.04$, 95%CI[0.01, 0.11], $p < 0.05$) were observed, supporting Hypothesis 2.

5 | STUDY 1 DISCUSSION

In this study, we found empirical evidence suggesting customer incivility is related to instigated incivility through an affective (negative affect) path, but *not* a cognitive path (self-regulatory resource depletion). This study is, to our knowledge, the first to

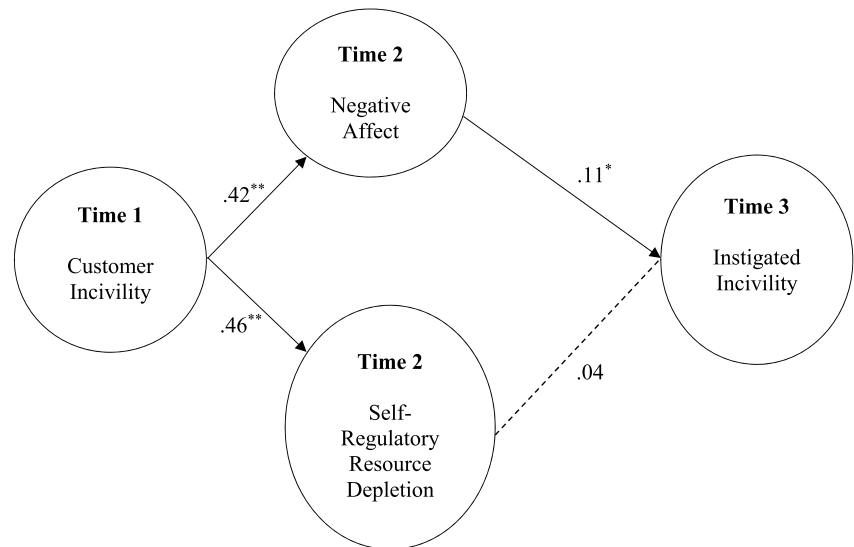
Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Customer incivility (T1)	2.99	1.2	0.94			
2. Negative affect (T2)	2.13	0.93	0.36** [0.24, 0.47]	0.90		
3. Depletion (T2)	4.61	1.6	0.39** [0.27, 0.50]	0.57** [0.47, 0.66]	0.94	
4. Instigated incivility (T3)	1.36	0.61	0.17* [0.03, 0.31]	0.17* [0.02, 0.31]	0.15* [0.00, 0.29]	0.92

TABLE 1 Means, standard deviations, and correlations between study 2 variables

Note: $N = 180$. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). Alpha reliability coefficients are listed on the diagonal.

* indicates $p < 0.05$. ** indicates $p < 0.01$. T1: Time 1; T2: Time 2; T3: Time 3.

FIGURE 1 Study 1 Structural equation model. $N = 180$. Path estimates are standardized. Each timepoint was separated by 1 week. Dashed paths indicate non-significant effects. ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.



assess these explanatory paths between customer incivility and instigated incivility. This study is limited, though; we did not control for baseline measures of phenomena, as is recommended (e.g., Lin et al., 2016). We also quantified customer incivility using an agreement format, which is not typical for assessment of behaviours. Finally, the instructions for our measures were not time specific; that is, participants were asked to recall phenomena in a general sense, and not specifically since the last survey. These limitations may have contributed to null findings surrounding self-regulatory resource depletion. Nevertheless, having established that at least the affective path has a role in linking customer incivility and instigated incivility, we now move on to Study 2, where we take a fine-grained (i.e., narrow) approach to the instigated incivility construct, reassess both pathways, and correct for the limitations of Study 1.

6 | STUDY 2 METHOD

6.1 | Participants and procedure

A sample of 520 customer-service employees (e.g., retail workers) were recruited via Prolific Academic (e.g., Grandey et al., 2021) and were (see Keith et al., 2017) required to be: (a) working within the United States, (b) working a customer-facing job, (c) commuting to work always, and (d) working full-time. Survey data were collected at 4 measurements occasions spanning the course of a work week: Saturday-Sunday evening (Time 1; baseline measures), Wednesday evening (Time 2; customer incivility), Thursday morning (Time 3; self-regulatory resource depletion and negative affect), and Friday evening (Time 4; instigated incivility). Participants were paid \$6.40 for completion of all surveys. An attrition rate of 62.5% was observed, resulting in a sample of 195 participants. After removing a pair of duplicate IP addresses and a participant who missed an attention check (i.e., “Select strongly agree to demonstrate attentiveness”; see Kam & Chan, 2018), our final sample consisted of 192 employees.¹

These employees were primarily White (82%) and female (62%) and reported an average age of 33 years ($SD = 10.2$). Participants worked an average of 42 ($SD = 7.85$) hours per week. The primary occupational sectors reported included retail (28%) and hospitality and food services (18%).

6.2 | Measures

The instructions of baseline measures referenced phenomena over the last 30 days, whereas state measures assessed phenomena in the present (i.e., “right now”). Customer incivility (assessed on a 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Many times*) scale; Time 2; $\alpha = 0.93$) and self-regulatory resource depletion (Time 1: $\alpha = 0.92$; Time 3: $\alpha = 0.90$) were assessed using the same instruments as Study 1.

6.2.1 | Negative affect

Negative affect, assessed at Time 1 (baseline; $\alpha = 0.80$) and Time 3 (state; $\alpha = 0.72$), was measured using the PANAS 5-item short form from Thompson (2007). Items were rated on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = *Very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *Extremely*). An example emotion was: “Hostile”.

6.2.2 | Instigated incivility

Instigated incivility was assessed using the 20-item Uncivil Workplace Behaviour Questionnaire—Instigated measure, developed and validated by Gray et al. (2017). This measure contains four subscales: a 4-item Hostility scale (Time 1: $\alpha = 0.80$, Time 4: $\alpha = 0.84$; e.g., “Raised your voice while speaking to another”), a 4-item Gossip scale (Time 1: $\alpha = 0.85$, Time 4: $\alpha = 0.83$; e.g., “Talked about another behind his/her back”), a 7-item Exclusionary Behaviour scale (Time 1: $\alpha = 0.80$, Time 4: $\alpha = 0.88$; e.g., “Did not consult another in reference

to a decision that should have involved them”), and a 5-item Privacy Invasion scale (Time 1: $\alpha = 0.71$, Time 4: $\alpha = 0.56$; e.g., “Interrupted another while they were speaking on the telephone”). Responses for each subscale (at both Time 1 and 4) were rated on a 1 (*Never*) to 5 (*Many times*) scale. At Time 4, participants were instructed to reflect on engagement in each kind of behaviour since Time 3 (i.e., Thursday morning).

7 | STUDY 2 RESULTS

Reported in Table 2 are the descriptive statistics and correlations between focal variables.

7.1 | Measurement modelling

We assessed the fit of our seven-factor measurement model using DWLS, consisting of customer incivility (predictor), state self-regulatory resource depletion and negative affect (mediators), and current levels of hostility, exclusionary behaviour, privacy invasion, and gossip (outcomes). This model, with customer incivility and exclusionary behaviour being configured using the parcelling approach described in the following section, showed close fit: $\chi^2(356) = 241.46$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.07. Next, we compared this seven-factor model to two alternative models: a six-factor model combining our mediators ($\chi^2(362) = 318.45$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.08), and a four-factor model combining all forms of incivility ($\chi^2(371) = 340.93$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.09). Both models fit worse than our intended seven-factor model: $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 76.99$, $p < 0.01$; $\Delta\chi^2(15) = 99.48$, $p < 0.01$, respectively.

7.2 | Structural modelling

Akin to Study 1, we conducted fully latent SEM using the lavaan package in R (Rosseel, 2012). Our structural model (see Figure 2), estimated using DWLS, demonstrated acceptable fit: $\chi^2(1328) = 1052.65$, $p > 0.05$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = 0.00; SRMR = 0.08. When configuring our structural model, baseline levels of our outcomes and mediators were controlled for to alleviate concerns over common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), as well as to engender more confidence in the temporal contributions and ordering of the variables in our model; this technique is popular among scholars testing process models (e.g., Lin et al., 2016), and addresses a limitation of Study 1. Due to the large number of paths added to our model by doing this, though, we opted to parcel measures that were larger than 5 items to reduce model complexity (e.g., Nasser & Takahashi, 2003). We parcelled our customer incivility (10 items) and exclusionary behaviour (7 items) scales down to three items using the psych package in R (Revelle, 2017). Here, the three-

item parcel is constructed by taking the three items with the greatest sum of variances and covariances between them (e.g., Cattell, 1956). We wish to note that while the use of parcels is debated among organizational scholars (e.g., Marsh et al., 2013), research has found them to be useful in smaller samples (Rioux et al., 2020). Recent organizational research has employed these methods under similar sample constraints (e.g., Jacobsen & Beehr, 2022; Park et al., 2022; Tai et al., 2022). Finally, we again allowed the residual terms for our mediators to covary.

Replicating results from Study 1, direct effects between customer incivility and negative affect ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.01$) were observed, providing additional support for Hypotheses 1. Here, we also found a significant direct effect from customer incivility to self-regulatory resource depletion ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$), supporting Hypothesis 3. In addition, significant direct effects from negative affect to hostility ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), exclusionary behaviour ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), and gossip ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.01$), as well as from depletion to gossip ($\beta = 0.09$, $p < 0.01$), were observed. Interestingly, a significant negative direct effect from depletion to hostility was also observed ($\beta = -0.09$, $p < 0.05$). Null direct effects from depletion to exclusionary behaviour ($\beta = -0.03$, $p = 0.28$) and privacy invasion ($\beta = -0.11$, $p = 0.25$), as well as negative affect to privacy invasion ($\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.26$), were observed. Significant direct effects from customer incivility to hostility ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and exclusionary behaviour ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) were found, though customer incivility shared null direct effects with privacy invasion ($\beta = 0.32$, $p = 0.12$) and gossip ($\beta = -0.05$, $p = 0.46$).

In line with procedures employed in Study 1, we used the Monte Carlo method with 20,000 replications to calculate confidence intervals for our indirect effects. Multiple significant indirect effects were found. More specifically, significant indirect effects from customer incivility to hostility through negative affect ($\beta = 0.06$, 95% CI[0.01, 0.12], $p < 0.05$), to exclusionary behaviour through negative affect ($\beta = 0.04$, 95% CI[0.01, 0.08], $p < 0.05$), and to gossip through negative affect ($\beta = 0.06$, 95% CI[0.02, 0.11], $p < 0.05$) were observed. Once again, we found no significant indirect effects through self-regulatory resource depletion. These results provide support for Hypothesis 5.

8 | STUDY 2 DISCUSSION

This study served as a conceptual replication and extension of Study 1. Here, we again found that the affective path, but *not* the cognitive path, worked to explain relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility. Extending Study 1, we, when taking a multi-factor approach to instigated incivility, found that *certain forms* of instigated incivility were explained by the affective pathway. More specifically, we found that negative affect mediated the relations between customer incivility and hostility, exclusionary behaviour, and gossip. Self-regulatory resource depletion was not a significant mediator here.

TABLE 2 Means, standard deviations, and correlations between study 2 variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Depletion (T1)	3.30	1.1	0.92								
2. Negative affect (T1)	1.88	0.74	0.60**	0.80							
			[0.50, 0.68]								
3. Gossip (T1)	1.67	0.73	0.32**	0.36**	0.85						
			[0.18, 0.44]	[0.23, 0.48]							
4. Hostility (T1)	1.55	0.62	0.27**	0.25**	0.58**	0.80					
			[0.13, 0.40]	[0.11, 0.38]	[0.47, 0.67]						
5. Exclusionary behaviour (T1)	1.28	0.39	0.19**	0.13	0.43**	0.36**	0.80				
			[0.05, 0.33]	[-0.01, 0.27]	[0.31, 0.54]	[0.22, 0.48]					
6. Privacy invasion (T1)	1.18	0.33	0.13	0.04	0.31**	0.28**	0.62**	0.71			
			[-0.01, 0.27]	[-0.10, 0.18]	[0.17, 0.43]	[0.15, 0.41]	[0.52, 0.70]				
7. Customer incivility (T2)	2.17	0.96	0.26**	0.20**	0.17*	0.27**	0.13	0.10	0.93		
			[0.12, 0.39]	[0.06, 0.34]	[0.03, 0.30]	[0.13, 0.39]	[-0.01, 0.27]	[-0.04, 0.24]			
8. Depletion (T3)	2.74	1.0	0.71**	0.54**	0.30**	0.25**	0.17*	0.12	0.26**	0.90	
			[0.64, 0.78]	[0.43, 0.64]	[0.16, 0.42]	[0.11, 0.38]	[0.03, 0.31]	[-0.02, 0.26]	[0.12, 0.39]		
9. Negative affect (T3)	1.34	0.48	0.25**	0.41**	0.29**	0.29**	0.15*	0.11	0.25**	0.44**	0.72
			[0.11, 0.38]	[0.28, 0.52]	[0.15, 0.41]	[0.16, 0.42]	[0.01, 0.29]	[-0.04, 0.24]	[0.11, 0.38]	[0.31, 0.54]	
10. Gossip (T4)	1.51	0.59	0.27**	0.30**	0.53**	0.27**	0.23**	0.20**	0.15*	0.33**	0.30**
			[0.13, 0.39]	[0.17, 0.43]	[0.42, 0.63]	[0.14, 0.40]	[0.09, 0.37]	[0.06, 0.33]	[0.01, 0.29]	[0.19, 0.45]	[0.16, 0.42]
11. Hostility (T4)	1.43	0.59	0.16*	0.17*	0.35**	0.50**	0.32**	0.22**	0.36**	0.20**	0.25**
			[0.02, 0.29]	[0.02, 0.30]	[0.22, 0.47]	[0.39, 0.60]	[0.19, 0.45]	[0.08, 0.35]	[0.23, 0.47]	[0.06, 0.33]	[0.11, 0.38]
12. Exclusionary behaviours (T4)	1.17	0.35	0.05	0.08	0.14	0.25**	0.35**	0.17*	0.22**	0.08	0.16*
			[-0.10, 0.19]	[-0.06, 0.22]	[-0.00, 0.27]	[0.11, 0.38]	[0.22, 0.47]	[0.03, 0.30]	[0.08, 0.35]	[-0.06, 0.22]	[0.02, 0.30]
13. Privacy invasion (T4)	1.14	0.23	-0.01	0.00	0.18*	0.20**	0.30**	0.45**	0.25**	0.09	0.13
			[-0.16, 0.13]	[-0.14, 0.15]	[0.04, 0.31]	[0.05, 0.33]	[0.17, 0.43]	[0.33, 0.56]	[0.11, 0.38]	[-0.05, 0.23]	[-0.01, 0.27]

(Continues)

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Variable	10	11	12	13
10. Gossip (T4)	0.83			
11. Hostility (T4)	0.53** [0.42, 0.63]	0.84		
12. Exclusionary behaviours (T4)	0.48** [0.36, 0.58]	0.62** [0.52, 0.70]	0.88	
13. Privacy invasion (T4)	0.23** [0.09, 0.36]	0.32** [0.19, 0.44]	0.44** [0.32, 0.55]	0.56

Note: $N = 192$. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). Alpha reliability coefficients are listed on the diagonal.

* indicates $p < 0.05$. ** indicates $p < 0.01$. T1: Time 1; T2: Time 2; T3: Time 3; T4: Time 4.

9 | GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research sought to explore a dual path model, building from the stressor-emotion model of voluntary workplace behaviour (Spector & Fox, 2002) and self-regulatory resource theory (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1998), that would explain the relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility. Through two studies using different time-lags, we found consistent support for the mediating effects of the affective pathway, but no support for the cognitive pathway—when taking both broad (i.e., unidimensional) and narrow (i.e., multidimensional) approaches to the instigated incivility construct. Our results have important theoretical and practical implications, which we detail further below.

9.1 | Theoretical and practical implications

Beginning with implications for research and theory, this study is the first (to our knowledge) to explore mechanisms underlying the relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility. As noted by Yao et al. (2022), investigating these mechanisms is key for developing a deeper understanding of the incivility construct. In both studies, we found that customer incivility related to instigated incivility through negative affect, but not through the depletion of self-control resources. This is in line with findings from Su et al. (2022) and Peng (2020), who found self-regulatory resources did not play an important role in the experienced—instigated colleague incivility dynamic. The results from our studies provide some support for the notion that customer incivility processes may be like colleague incivility processes—though future research on the mediating mechanisms of this dynamic is warranted before more concrete claims about the similarities of colleague and customer incivility can be made.

Furthering our novel contributions, we are the first to assess customer incivility's relations with unique forms of instigated incivility. In Study 2, we found that experiencing incivility from customers at the beginning of the week (Monday-Wednesday) contributed to (i.e., had direct effects with) hostility (e.g., rolling one's eyes) and exclusionary behaviour (e.g., failing to inform one of information they should be aware of) at the end of the week (Thursday-Friday). We also unexpectedly found, in Study 2, that self-regulatory resource depletion shared a significant negative direct effect with hostility. Moreover, though customer incivility shared product-moment correlations with privacy invasion ($r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$) and gossip ($r = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), significant direct effects were not observed in our structural model. We suggest that these null direct effects may be due to model complexity and a lack of power (see our Limitations section). Our second study adds nuance to prior research that has found that customer incivility relates to instigated incivility (e.g., Kim & Qu, 2019; Walker et al., 2017) by focussing on various forms of instigated incivility, as opposed to just instigated incivility broadly.

How, though, does customer incivility relate to unique forms of instigated incivility? To begin, we found no support for the mediating

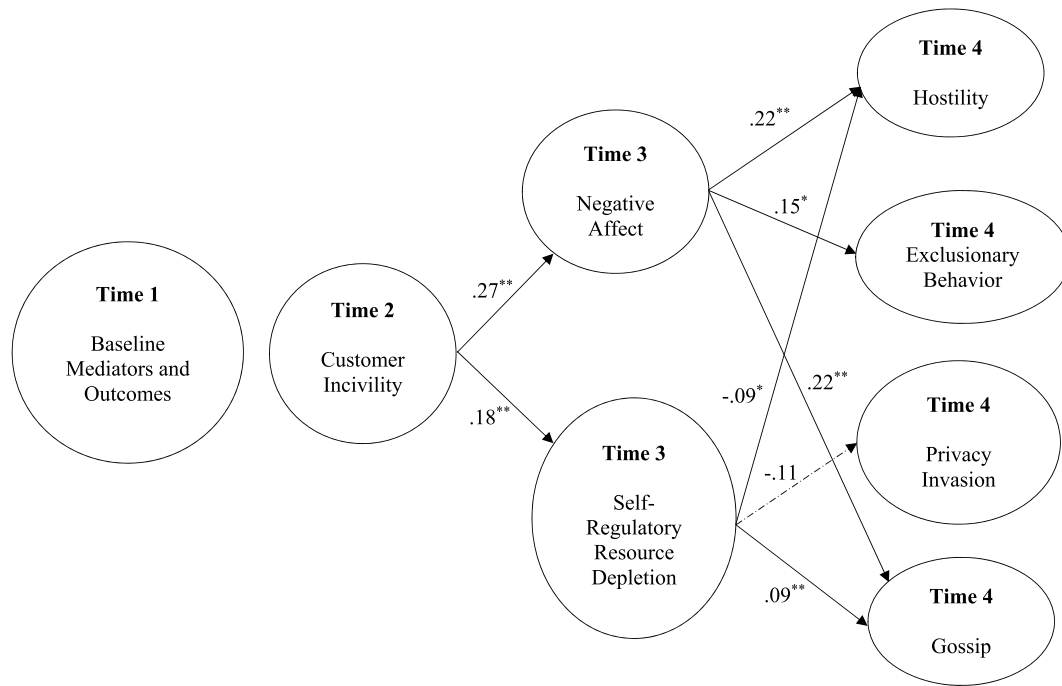


FIGURE 2 Study 2 Structural equation model. $N = 192$. Direct paths from Customer Incivility to our outcomes, as well as non-hypothesized null effects, are hidden for readability. Path estimates are standardized. Dashed paths indicate non-significant effects. Time 1: Sunday evening, Time 2: Wednesday evening, Time 3: Thursday morning, Time 4: Friday evening. ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

role of self-regulatory resource depletion—both in Study 1 and Study 2. This was unexpected, as self-regulatory resources theoretically *should* have a role in the experienced customer—instigated incivility process. Indeed, due to service norms, employees seeking to remain in good standing with their organization will have to constrain their behaviour to avoid retaliating at the customer exhibiting unruly behaviour—draining these resources. Our direct effects from customer incivility to self-regulatory resource depletion in Study 2 support this notion. When discussing explanatory mechanisms, however, it could be that negative affect's role subsumes that of self-regulatory resource depletion. Indeed, in both studies we, in accordance with best practice (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), allowed the residuals of our mediators to covary. In essence, this allowed for negative affect and self-regulatory resource depletion to compete for explained variance in our incivility outcomes. Although caution is warranted when interpreting null findings, the non-significant indirect effects we observed through self-regulatory resource depletion dovetail with research from Peng (2020) and Su et al. (2022), who found that negative affect was the strongest mediator for the relations between colleague experienced—instigated incivility when compared to such depletion. On the other hand, as we discuss in our Limitations section, the null findings we observed surrounding self-regulatory resources could be due to the spacing of our measurement occasions in both studies.

Alternatively, we found consistent mediating evidence for the affective pathway—regardless of the operationalization of the instigated incivility construct. We found that such emotions worked to, in part, explain the relation between customer incivility and hostility,

exclusionary behaviour, and gossip. The former two indirect effects were expected. Hostile behaviours, which reflect low level aggression (e.g., raising one's voice, giving someone a dirty look), may be almost reflexive in the face of customer incivility. Indeed, uncivil treatment leads to emotions such as anger (Adiyaman & Meier, 2021), and these emotions tend to manifest themselves in the facial expressions and body language of those feeling their effects (Adolphs, 2002). Exclusionary behaviours, meanwhile, may represent a more “thought out” or systematic emotional response to uncivil exchanges. That is, these behaviours may represent particularly mean-spirited/revengeful, yet cathartic (Bushman et al., 2001), responses to uncivil exchanges. For example, a waitress who experiences incivility from a customer may become angry or upset, and then find it satisfying to watch from the kitchen as the customer becomes agitated as they purposefully stall the delivery of their food (exclusionary behaviour). Alternatively, someone may use such emotions as a justification for “getting back” at another colleague they dislike by failing to provide them with necessary information. Indeed, negative emotions are closely linked to revenge behaviour and intentions (e.g., Barcaccia et al., 2022; Little et al., 2007). Unexpectedly, we found that gossip was also related to customer incivility through negative affect. On second thought, though, this finding is perhaps less surprising. Someone who is experiencing negative affect after an uncivil customer exchange may go back to their colleagues and talk badly about the focal customer. Doing so may help the focal employee move on from the uncivil experience, bringing about the feeling of catharsis that those experiencing negative emotions will be seeking (Bushman et al., 2001).

Our results also have potential practical implications. Firstly, our results suggest that customer incivility works to engender a family of employee-instigated behaviours that, over time, have the potential to create an environment of rudeness (Andersson & Pearson, 1999; Foulk et al., 2016). Reiterating recommendations from prior scholars (Sliter et al., 2010), we suggest that supervisors should monitor the well-being of their employees as they engage with customers throughout the day. Allowing for microbreaks (i.e., short, voluntary, informal respite activities engaged in between tasks, Kim et al., 2017) may help buffer the impact of customer incivility on negative affect (as such emotions can linger for days or longer, Leger et al., 2018), and reduce the likelihood of focal employees instigating incivility. On the other hand, service organizations may be best served by investing in tactics that help curtail customer incivility in the first place. Hospitality and tourism researchers have emphasized the role of positive reciprocity (i.e., returning polite and warm customer behaviour in kind) and customer investment (i.e. the investment of time and social resources into customer interactions, e.g., Morais et al., 2004) in creating a pleasant environment; perceived or actual investment into customers and their desires is likely to be met with grace, understanding, and otherwise benevolent treatment. Seeing as customer incivility relates to outcomes far beyond incivility (e.g., turnover, see Han et al., 2016), ensuring that customers feel cared for and valued is paramount for preventing customer incivility.

Altogether, these results advance our understanding of the nomological network of customer incivility by delineating *how* these exchanges result in instigated incivility, and which forms of such behaviour may follow such exchanges (i.e., hostility, exclusionary behaviour, gossip). That is, we provide evidence that supports the notion that customer incivility relates to incivility outcomes, both broad and narrow (i.e., hostility, exclusionary behaviour, gossip) through one path: an affective (i.e., negative affect) path. We strongly recommend that scholars continue to investigate the incivility-related consequences of customer incivility, as doing so would inform interventions aimed at curtailing this particularly deleterious family of behaviours (see Yao et al., 2022).

9.2 | Potential limitations

This research possesses both methodological and theoretical limitations. Beginning with the former, our studies relied on monomethod data; data were exclusively self-reported. This increases the chance of data distortion via dishonest responding (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986) or common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). It should be noted, however, that an often mentioned remedy of common method bias is temporal spacing of predictors and outcomes (Podsakoff et al., 2012)—spacing the current research included. The spacing of our measurement occasions, however, may also be considered a potential limitation. That is, though we used within-month and within-week lags and found consistent results for negative affect, we failed to capture within-day fluctuations of experienced customer—instigated incivility dynamics with our designs. A daily diary, within-persons approach would be an interesting follow-up to this research. Building from this

point, our time lags may have obfuscated results surrounding self-regulatory resource depletion. Though other studies have used longer lags (e.g., Deng et al., 2017; Lin & Johnson, 2015), it is possible that such within-persons designs may be necessary to capture dynamics surrounding the depletion of these resources (which may be volatile) and their role within the customer incivility process, specifically. Negative affect has been found to linger for potentially days at a time (Leger et al., 2018), and thus may have been more suitable for our lags. Our sample sizes in both studies were also small ($N < 200$), which greatly limits the number of exploratory analyses (e.g., moderation) that we can perform with our data. Small sample SEM is acceptable, though, using the estimation methods we employed (Hox et al., 2010). Regardless, the possibility exists that we observed erroneous (i.e., Type 1 and Type 2 error) counterintuitive (i.e., negative direct effect between depletion and hostility) and null (i.e., null direct effects between customer incivility and gossip and privacy invasion) effects due to sampling error and concerns with statistical power. Finally, though in line with our goals (i.e., determining how cognitive and affective pathways impacted customer incivility—instigated incivility processes in a general sense), our instigated incivility scales used a broad “other” referent. This means that it is unclear *who* exactly was the recipient of the instigated incivility engendered by negative affect and self-regulatory resource depletion. The items found in each instigated incivility scale employed could apply to both colleagues and customers; for example, one could address a colleague or a customer inappropriately in front of others (Study 1 scale) or fail to pass on vital information to a customer (e.g., failing to inform them of discounts) and a colleague (e.g., failing to inform them of angry customers) (Study 2 exclusionary behaviour scale). Though many studies use broad “other” referents when measuring instigated incivility (e.g., Miranda & Welbourne, 2021; Torkelson et al., 2016), future research should focus on source-specific instigated incivility in response to uncivil customer exchanges. It might be that the underlying mechanisms of the customer incivility—instigated incivility process differ per source.

There are also theoretical limitations to consider. Primarily, we did not assess alternative pathways linking customer incivility to instigated incivility, such as a motivational pathway. We focussed on cognitive and affective pathways due to their inherent ties to emotional and physical well-being (e.g., Baumeister & Exline, 2000; Diener et al., 2009), their support as mechanisms in colleague incivility dynamics (e.g., Rosen et al., 2016; Tarraf et al., 2019), and because they are often contrasted with one another when discussing workplace mistreatment (e.g., Fox & Spector, 2010). Alternative pathways, such as motivational pathways (e.g., affective commitment, Taylor et al., 2012), are important, however, and our research cannot be considered a holistic test of customer incivility mechanisms due to the exclusion of such pathways.

9.3 | Future research directions and conclusion

Moving on to future research directions, future research should explore whether the relations observed here hold for the various targets of instigated incivility (e.g., customers, coworkers), perhaps

using more robust designs (i.e., within-persons designs). Furthermore, researchers should explore moderators for the effects observed here in larger samples. Dispositional individual differences constructs, such as an external locus of control (Zhou et al., 2014), have been found to influence incivility dynamics, and may be relevant to customer incivility's nomological network. Finally, it would be useful to explore additional consequences of customer incivility beyond instigated incivility. For example, what if, because of self-regulatory resource depletion or negative affect, customer-facing employees who routinely encounter incivility from customers engage in poorer health behaviours (e.g., worsened sleep hygiene), leading to more on-the-job accidents or injuries? Such findings would be of heightened importance for practitioners.

To conclude, the present research, using two time-lagged samples, assessed cognitive and affective pathways, specifically self-regulatory resource depletion and negative affect, that would explain relations between customer incivility and instigated incivility, using both broad and narrow operationalizations of the latter construct. Using structural equation modelling, numerous indirect effects were observed—though only through the affective pathway. These findings add evidence for one mechanism that links customer incivility to instigated incivility, though others should be investigated. Future research should continue to explore the consequences of uncivil behaviour from customers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest with this research.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data are available upon request.

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ENDNOTE

¹ It should be noted that portions of this dataset have been published; the published study, however, only shares overlap with our outcome variables (i.e., Time 4, instigated incivility). Customer incivility and our mediators were not utilized in the published study, and the fundamental goals differ between the two. Thus, we feel this study is distinct, despite an overlap in outcomes.

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