The Role of Emotional Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence in Workplace Incivility and Workplace Satisfaction

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The Role of Emotional Self-Efficacy and Emotional Intelligence in Workplace Incivility and Workplace Satisfaction

Abstract

Research on emotional intelligence has shown that adaptive emotional functioning is related to a variety of positive outcomes both inside and outside of the workplace. Prior research also indicates that individuals who have greater self-efficacy for a realm of behaviours have better functioning in this realm. The studies described in this thesis focused on: 1) the development and validation of a measure of emotional self-efficacy, 2) examining the paths between emotional self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, negative and positive affect, and the three workplace outcomes (workplace incivility perpetration, workplace incivility victimization and job satisfaction), and 3) decreasing workplace incivility and increasing job satisfaction through an intervention designed to increase emotional self-efficacy.

Extending prior research in the areas of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, a measure of emotional self-efficacy was developed and validated. Participants from several regions of Australia completed an emotional self-efficacy scale as well as measures of constructs expected to be related to emotional self-efficacy. Emotional self-efficacy, as assessed by the ESEQ, was best conceptualised as a uni-dimensional construct. A factor analysis showed that all 32 items grouped into a one-component solution, covering all four facets of Mayer and Salovey's (1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 1999) four-factor ability model. The internal consistency for the total scale was .96.

Path analysis using AMOS 6.0 (Arbuckle, 2005) showed that emotional self-efficacy significantly predicted dispositional emotional intelligence, which in turn was a significant predictor of 'respondents' negative and positive affect. Individuals with higher levels of negative affect were more likely to be perpetrators of workplace

incivility than individuals with lower levels of negative affect. Individuals who engaged in higher levels of incivility perpetration were more likely to be victims of incivility than individuals who never or rarely engaged in uncivil behaviour. Being a victim of incivility was associated with higher levels of negative affect and lower levels of job satisfaction. Counter to original predictions, positive affect was unrelated to either incivility perpetration or victimization.

An experimental study examined the effects of a writing intervention intended to enhance emotional self-efficacy on emotional intelligence and the workplace outcomes of job satisfaction and workplace incivility. Participants in the emotional self-efficacy writing intervention condition who were initially low or moderate in emotional self-efficacy showed significantly higher emotional self-efficacy at post test compared to the control writing group. Those individuals who were already high in self-efficacy at pre-test were not significantly different. Individuals in the emotional self-efficacy writing intervention condition showed significantly higher typical emotional intelligence at post test than those in the control writing group. Participants in the intervention condition also showed significantly more positive affect and scored significantly lower on workplace incivility perpetration. Participants in the emotional self-efficacy writing intervention condition who were initially low or moderate on being the victim of incivility showed significantly lower victimisation at post test compared to the control writing group. There were no significant intervention effects for negative affect and job satisfaction.

Overview

Research on emotional intelligence has shown that adaptive emotional functioning is related to a variety of positive outcomes both inside and outside of the workplace. Prior research also indicates that individuals who have greater self-efficacy for a realm of behaviours have better functioning in this realm. The combining of these two concepts into the one construct, namely emotional self-efficacy may answer a key question that has not previously been addressed; that is, the role confidence or self-efficacy for emotional functioning plays in the effects of emotional intelligence. A construct must be measurable before its utility can be assessed. Therefore the thesis will describe the development and validation of a measure of emotional self-efficacy. When such a measure is incorporated into a model of workplace functioning, a key question would be, "what are the links between emotional self-efficacy and workplace outcomes, particularly workplace incivility (from the target and perpetrator perspective) and workplace satisfaction?"

To examine the causal role of emotional self-efficacy in the workplace, emotional self-efficacy would need to be experimentally manipulated. Examining the effects of a writing intervention to enhance emotional self-efficacy would build on research of James Pennebaker and lead to a better understanding of the relationship between emotional self-efficacy, emotional intelligence, positive and negative affect, and workplace incivility.