

Forgive or Vengeance: Employee response to customer incivility

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Abstract

This study examines how organizational culture moderates the effect of customer incivility on frontline employee (FLE) response. We propose that forgiveness determines their customer-oriented behavior following customer incivility; vengeance mediates the effect of customer incivility on dysfunctional behavior. We further posit that the effects of customer incivility on FLE forgiveness and vengeance would vary depending on the organizational culture (i.e., clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy). We test the research hypotheses by conducting a survey, followed by a scenario-based experiment. Our findings show that forgiveness of customer incivility determines FLEs' customer-oriented behavior; whereas vengeance influences FLEs' dysfunctional behavior following customer incivility. Furthermore, clan culture and adhocracy culture positively moderate the effect of customer incivility on forgiveness, while market culture positively moderates the effect of customer incivility on vengeance.

Keywords: *Customer incivility; Organizational culture; Forgiveness*

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