

**EFFECTS OF MANAGERIAL HUBRIS ON WORKPLACE INCIVILITY: A
QUANTITATIVE STUDY ON ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AT A STATE UNIVERSITY****Prof. Yener PAZARCİK (Ph.D.)** **Prof. Pelin KANTEN (Ph.D.)** **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the effects of managerial hubris on workplace incivility. The related literature incorporates studies that suggest that managerial hubris leads to some unfavorable organizational consequences. Therefore, managerial hubris and its consequences are considered to be significant precursors of workplace incivility at universities. The survey method was adopted to collect data from 138 administrative staff members and academics at a one of the public university in Türkiye. The obtained data were analyzed by structural equation modelling. The results revealed that managerial hubris had positive and significant effects on hostility as a component of workplace incivility. In addition, it was found that managerial hubris exerts a positive and significant effect on intervention of social life domain of workplace incivility. However, managerial hubris was observed to have no effect on ostracism as a subdomain of workplace incivility. Moreover, the study demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the participants' perceptions of workplace incivility and the titles of the university staff.

Keywords: *Managerial Hubris, Workplace Incivility, Administrative Staff, Academics.*

JEL Codes: *M10, M20, M54.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of the 21st century, researchers have been attempting to understand which characteristics that are highly influential in effective decision-making processes and may potentially lead to high performance have become prominent in managerial positions. The likely underlying factors, as researchers emphasize, are managers' personal schemes, such as their values, experiences and personalities (Hiller and Hambrick, 2005: 301). In these personal schemes, personality traits stand out more prominently than the others because they are regarded as notable factors affecting individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Recent studies focus on the negative sides of personality traits which are thought

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to be effective in the leading styles of managers and leaders and among the allegedly negative sides of personality is hubris syndrome resulting from and influential in how managers and leaders exercise power and authority, predominantly with no limitation or restriction (Şendoğdu et al., 2024: 129). In addition to its managerial aspect, hubris syndrome is also defined by Owen and Davidson (2009) as a particular personality disorder observable in individuals in a position of power (Petit and Bollaert, 2012: 268). The syndrome refers to an excess of confidence accompanied by extreme pride. In other words, it is a propensity of managers to overestimate their abilities, knowledge and skills. (Picone et al., 2021: 346). Hubris syndrome causes managers to see themselves as exceptional relative to their peers and subordinates and believe that they are superior. Because of their character traits, they tend to ignore meaningful contribution of others and disregard their peers. It is also considered that hubris represents a cognitive bias which affects individuals' decision-making. Furthermore, hubris may damage moral and ethical constructs of managers and leaders which may cause them to ignore ethical considerations in decision-making. Thus, it can be inferred that hubris syndrome may lead to a more frequent occurrence of unethical behaviors in organizations (McManus, 2018: 172).

In a working area, power resources have an undeniable importance in how managers manage and supervise an organization's resources to achieve the organizational goals. However, it may be anticipated that managers' and leaders' excessive and wanton use of power resources may result in a predisposition to narcissism and managerial hubris. It is asserted that the hierarchical organizational structures, superior-subordinate relations, rules and procedures, and authority levels are regarded as factors that contribute to the emergence of managerial hubris (Yeşilkuş, 2023: 32-33). Managerial hubris, which occurs in professional settings depending on the manager's personality traits, his or her role and authority in organizational processes, and many other factors and is frequently encountered in both public and private sectors leads to some positive and negative consequences (Durmaz et al., 2024: 26). In addition, viewed from the negative side of managerial hubris, it can be suggested that since managers suffering from hubris are inclined to take high risks, they may easily engage in unethical behaviors (Zeitoun et al., 2019: 4). Moreover, social context and organizational culture may also play a crucial role in the emergence of hubris as they may encourage hubristic attitudes and behaviors to develop. It is assumed that hubristic attitudes and behaviors are more challenging in universities, especially compared to business organizations (Akstinaite and Lewis, 2024: 2). Because there are high demands and expectations from individuals working at higher education institutions, they are supposed to exhibit more hubristic attitudes (Yaşar et al., 2023: 1221). Despite this fact, there is limited research to date examining the influence of managerial hubris on professional environments at academic institutions. Given this evident gap, the aim of this research is to investigate the effects of managerial hubris on workplace incivility through the lens of university staff to contribute to the related literature on how managerial hubris exerts its influence on higher education institutions.

2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The concept of hubris stem from Greek mythology which used to illustrate “tragic flaw”, or faultiness symbolizes sovereigns or conquerors in Greek tragedies encompasses someone who have an overconfidence and excessive pride (Eckhaus and Sheaffer, 2018: 305). The significance of hubris in Greek mythology based on various tales which emphasize hubristic attitudes was one in which a powerful figure, think him or herself superior with extreme arrogance and self-confidence, hence exhibit attitudes and behaviors including such as ignorance and underestimating others (Owen, 2008: 428). In other words, hubris is also known to be associated with Nemesis who was the Ancient Greek goddess of retribution who had extreme pride to assume godlike power (Sadler-Smith et al., 2017: 527). Moreover, in Greek mythology, there is a legend of Icarus and Dædalus which is considered as one of the significant examples of hubris. According to this legend, Icarus (son of Dædalus) begins to rise in the sky with the power of his wings which were developed by the crafting of his father. When he began to look down on everything from the upper side, he thought that he was superior as he raised. However, as he gets closer to the sun, due to the wax melting, the wings started to dissolve. Even, his father’s warning, he didn’t ignore and go on flying because of hubristic attitudes then suddenly Icarus drowned into the Aegean Sea and he died (Çiftçi, 2020: 2). Consequently, it can be said that the word “hubris” originates from ancient Greek mythology which describes extreme pride in individuals. When it comes to the modern times, this concept defined as “overrated arrogance or extreme self-confidence (Brennan and Conroy, 2013: 172).

The concept of hubris was first identified in the field of psychology in the 1960s and 1970s as an excess of confidence for obtaining a certain result integrated with extreme pride. As Picone et al. (2014) suggest, the hubris hypothesis within the business and management field was proposed by Roll (1986) to describe overconfidence of managers who exaggerate the “potential synergy value of acquisitions”. In other words, in the course of a takeover, managers overprice their bids and overpay for their targets because of their hubristic tendency. For example, the case of Enron and WorldCom presents us with a case of failure as to how leaders suffering from hubris may act in a careless and arrogant manner in their managerial practices (Park and Yoo, 2017: 705). Moreover, in the business world, organizations such as Lehman Brothers and the Royal Bank of Scotland Group confronted failure due to the hubristic attitudes of their leaders. Thus, it is possible to express that when leaders or managers’ hubris tendency are uncontrolled, it may damage an organization’s effectiveness and negatively affect its survival capabilities (Şendoğdu et al., 2024: 129). In this context, hubristic attitudes and behaviors in professional settings are defined as hubris syndrome. This syndrome is considered to be an acquired condition and related to the disorder of the possession of power, and power leads to devastation when held for a period of time and little restriction is imposed on leaders or managers holding it. Otherwise, Owen and Davidson (2009) describe hubris syndrome as accompanied by such personality disorders as narcissistic,

antisocial, and histrionic personality disorders. Besides, it is also examined as the dark side or destructive part of leadership (Owen and Davidson, 2009: 1398).

Managerial hubris examined as psychological traits and characteristics which are observed in leaders and managers have also attracted broad attention in the professional realm due to its effects on organizational performance. More of previous research generally emphasizes the negative impacts of managerial hubris, but few focus on its favorable outcomes, such as innovative behavior, strategic planning capability, advertising strategy, and organization's performance (Gu et al., 2024: 361-362). In addition, managers with hubristic tendency strive to improve the organization's well-being and, without hesitation, engage in risky projects, regardless of the prospect of failure. Due to the arrogance of managers, they put forward a centralized decision-making process which facilitates sales growth and profitability. Besides it is believed that these managers implement diversification strategies more effectively and efficiently. Therefore, thanks to all these positive outcomes of hubris, organizations are advised to employ arrogant managers in executive positions to avail themselves of the perquisites of positive managerial hubristic behavioral (Loia et al., 2022: 1138-1140). Accordingly, it can be asserted that both positive and negative consequences of hubristic characteristics of managers may be observed in an organization (Çiftçi, 2020: 6).

When viewed from the dark side of managerial hubris, the characteristics such as overconfidence, overambition, and disregard and criticism, and sense of power may lead managers to overreach themselves, which may demolish organizations and threaten the well-being of individuals in the long term (Sadler-Smith et al., 2017: 525). However, it is asserted that due to these managers inclined to take high risks, managerial hubris facilitates executives' engaging in unethical behaviors (Zeitoun et al., 2019: 4). In other words, hubris damage individuals' moral awareness, which in turn increases their likelihood of ignoring ethical factors in decision-making (McManus, 2018: 172). Furthermore, due to hubris's associations with superiority and egoism, it creates an impression that managers exaggerate their capabilities, which may lead to aggressive, antisocial, and oppressive behaviors (Şimşek and Coşar, 2023: 4). Therefore, it can be inferred that hubristic tendency and arrogance cause detrimental effects on communicative processes within an organization. While negative relationships among individuals may increase their stress levels and lead to unfavorable attitudes, the levels of their job satisfaction and morale may decrease. Moreover, it is possible that hubristic tendencies and behaviors negatively affect organizational commitment, relationships among individuals, and well-being of others (Yaşar et al., 2023: 1221). As a result, managerial hubris is seen as a factor that negatively affects interpersonal relationships in the work environment and disrupts the communication climate in the organization. At the same time, it is believed to damage hierarchical professional relationships and create an uncivil environment for employees. Therefore, it is possible to identify one of the negative consequences of managerial hubris as workplace incivility.

Workplace incivility is characterized as low-intensity negative behaviors in the working environment which compromise actions that intent to harm colleagues and create a hostile work environment (Bijalwan et al., 2024: 4). Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined workplace incivility as a slight form of mistreatment, however it is expected to affect an employee's attitudes and behaviors in the organizational life. In other words, it is related to being rude, discourteous, and impolite or includes some form of antisocial behaviors which lead to stress and anger in the working area (Jain et al., 2024: 232). Generally, workplace incivility includes overall mistreatment in the organization, which is shaped by some behaviors such as "bullying, aggression, physical and verbal abuse, emotional, physical or psychological violence, or deviant and antisocial behavior" (Alramadan and Zhang, 2022: 19). For instance, workplace incivility incorporates a wide range of negative behaviors, such as disregard and disdain for others, aggression, exclusion, rudeness, blaming, sabotaging, unhelpfulness, and social undermining (Jackson et al., 2024: 483). It has been observed in the literature that the increasing negative consequences of workplace incivility in work life have led researchers in recent years to examine the reasons underlying workplace incivility and to seek solutions that will reduce incivility behaviors (Kanten, 2014: 13). Accordingly, it is found that individual characteristics such as type A personality, hostility, aggression, ego, internal competition, low agreeableness, psychopathy, and narcissism, low emotional intelligence, lack of moral maturity, position and power are related to workplace incivilities (Terlecki, 2011: 5-9).

It has been observed in recent years that workplace incivility has also been common in higher education institutions as academic incivility, which is initiated by students, staff, administrators or other faculty members. At academic institutions, workplace incivility instances, such as disrespectful, impolite, or aggressive behaviors, seem prevalent, and they may result in emotional or physical discomfort. To prevent their adverse effects from occurring, they need to be identified immediately, and their antecedents addressed and found out (Al-Asfour, 2023: 31). The available literature has featured the relationships between hubris/arrogance and incivility. To list some, Cleary et al. (2015) suggest that displaying arrogant attitudes and behaviors may undermine the cohesiveness of workplaces and the relationships among individuals. Milyavsky et al. (2017) focus on individuals who perceive high arrogance, state that it is expected of them to exhibit dismissive attitudes. Chillab et al. (2022) problematize the dark sides of leadership such as abusive, toxic, and managerial hubris which can lead employees to exhibit abusive behaviors, e.g. incivility. Demirbilek et al. (2022) have indicated that arrogance has a negative effect on the organizational climate and collective engagement of individuals in academic institutions. In the same vein, Mitchell et al. (2024) suggest that leader or manager arrogance lead to negative relationships, aggression, and incivility in workplaces. Thus, it is clear from the previous research that managerial hubris negatively affects the organizational climate and working relations. Moreover, it is also obvious that managers who exhibit hubristic attitudes and behaviors cause an uncivil environment in the organizational environment. Therefore, it can be inferred that managerial hubris

results in workplace incivility perception in the working area. In this context, the following hypotheses are developed:

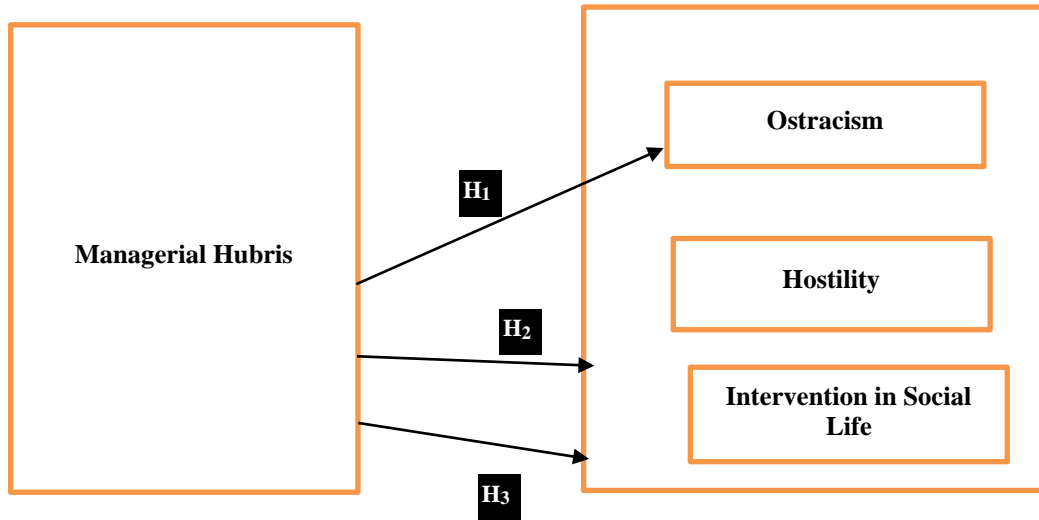
H₁: Managerial hubris influences the ostracism perception of employees.

H₂: Managerial hubris influences the hostility perception of employees.

H₃: Managerial hubris influences employees' attitudes towards intervention in social life.

H₄: Levels of workplace incivility differ according to the titles of university staff members.

Figure 1. Research Model



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Sampling and Procedures

The sample was composed of academics and administrative staff at a university in Türkiye. The authors recruited 138 employees through convenience sampling. Out of 200 questionnaires that have been sent out, 170 were returned, representing a response rate of 75%. After the elimination of the cases that have incomplete data and outliers, 138 questionnaires (69%) were accepted as valid and included in the analyses. The questionnaire form used for the purpose of the present research contains two different measures related to the research variables. Out of the 138 respondents, 52% were male and 48% were female, 24% were between 18 and 33 years of age, 62% were between 34 and 49 years, 14% above 50 years. Additionally, the majority of the participants (70%) held both bachelor's and graduate degree. 45% of the participants had professional experience ranging from 1 to 5 years, 35% from 6 to 10 years, and 20% more than 11 years in the same university.

3.2. Measures

The measures used in the questionnaires were adapted from previous studies in the literature. All measures have been adapted to Turkish by the lecturers and pilot study has been conducted for the validity of these measures. Before the distribution of the survey to the actual sample, a pilot study was conducted in order to determine whether the questions had been understood properly and to check the reliability of the scales. As a result of the pilot study, some corrections have been conducted in the questionnaire forms. A five-point Likert scale was employed in the surveys – i.e., 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: agree or not agree, 4: agree, and 5: strongly agree. Moreover, five demographic questions were included in the questionnaires. Firstly, all the scales were first subjected to exploratory factor analyses to check the dimensions and then to confirmatory factor analyses.

- *Managerial Hubris Scale*: This scale was adapted from Claxton et al. (2015). The exploratory factor analyses utilizing the principal component analysis with varimax rotation was applied to the adapted scale to check the dimensions. Considering the managerial hubris scale variables, one factor solution was obtained in accordance with the theoretical structure. Two examples of the items addressed to the respondents are as follows: “tendency to speak in third person in the ‘royal we’” and “excessive confidence in own judgment”.

- *Workplace Incivility Scale*: The workplace incivility scale was taken from Kanten (2014) study. The exploratory factor analyses using the principal component analysis with varimax rotation was applied to the adapted scale to check the dimensions. In view of the workplace incivility scale variables, three factor solutions (dedication, vigor, and absorption) were obtained in accordance with the theoretical structure. Two examples of the items addressed to the respondents are as follows: “my manager or friend ignore me” and “my manager or my friend take my equipment not by asking”.

Table 1. Exploratory Factor and Reliability Analyses

Scales	Number of Items	Example Items	Factor Structure/Removed Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha
Managerial Hubris	18	“Tendency to speak in third person in the ‘royal we’” “Excessive confidence in own judgment”	1 component	0.54 to 0.85	0.718

Workplace Incivility	14	“My manager or friend ignore me” “My manager or my friend take my equipment not by asking”	3 components	0.59 to 0.87	0.934
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After the exploratory factor analysis, the confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on LISREL 10.00. The goodness-of-fit indices are presented in Table 2. All the fit indices fall within the acceptable ranges (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003: 52; Meydan and Şeşen, 2011: 35).

Table 2. Goodness-of-Fit Indices of Scales

Variables	χ^2	df	CMIN/DF ≤ 5	GFI ≥ .85	AGFI ≥ .80	CFI ≥ .90	NFI ≥ .90	NNFI ≥ .90	RMSEA ≤ .08
Managerial Hubris	586.62	186	3.15	0.90	0.87	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.000
Workplace Incivility	178.20	99	1.80	0.85	0.80	0.98	0.95	0.98	0.079

3.3. Data Analysis

The software programs SPSS for Windows 29 and LISREL 10.00 were used to analyze the data obtained. After the exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, the descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation coefficients were examined. Following that, the structural equation modelling was employed to test all the research hypotheses.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Measurement Model

For verification, the two-step model approach by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was adopted. According to this approach, firstly the measurement model needs to be tested by performing validity and reliability assessments for each measure. If acceptable values are obtained, one can proceed with the structural model. The results suggested a good fit between the measurement model and the data. The results of the measurement model are χ^2 : 1355.49; df: 638; χ^2/df : 2.12; RMSEA: 0.053; GFI: 0.85; CFI: 0.98; NFI: 0.91; NNFI: 0.98; AGFI: 0.82; and SRMR: 0.041. These values indicate that the measurement model is acceptable.

4.2. Descriptive Analyses

The descriptive analyses yielded means, standard deviations, and correlations concerning managerial hubris and workplace incivility. The values are provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Managerial Hubris and Workplace Incivility

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
Managerial Hubris	3.80	.66	1			
Hostility	1.83	.82	.194*	1		
Intervention in Social Life	1.63	.64	.152*	.605 **	1	
Ostracism	1.88	.79	.119	.639 **	.559**	1

The correlation results in Table 3 show that there is a positive relationship between managerial hubris ($r=.194$; $p<0.05$) and hostility dimension of workplace incivility. In addition, it is evident that there is a positive relationship between managerial hubris ($r=.152$; $p<0.05$) and intervention in social life dimension of workplace incivility. On the other hand, there is no relationship between managerial hubris and ostracism dimension of workplace incivility.

4.3. Anova Test Analysis

Table 4. Anova Test Results

Workplace incivility & Titles of academic and administrative staff					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	9,341	8	1,168	3,151	.003
Within Groups	44,097	119	,371		
Total	53,438	127			

According to the Anova test results, it is found that workplace incivility levels of individuals significantly differed related to the titles of academic and administrative staff.

4.4. Structural Model

After the correlation analyses and measurement model, the study applied a structural equation model to verify the hypotheses for the causal relationships between the variables in accordance with the available literature. The results of the structural model analysis are χ^2 : 471.80; df: 200; χ^2/df : 2.36; RMSEA: 0.058; CFI: 0.99; GFI: 0.90; NNFI: 0.99; NFI: 0.98; AGFI: 0.88; and SRMR: 0.041 (Table 4). These results indicate that the structural model is acceptable.

Figure 2. Structural Model

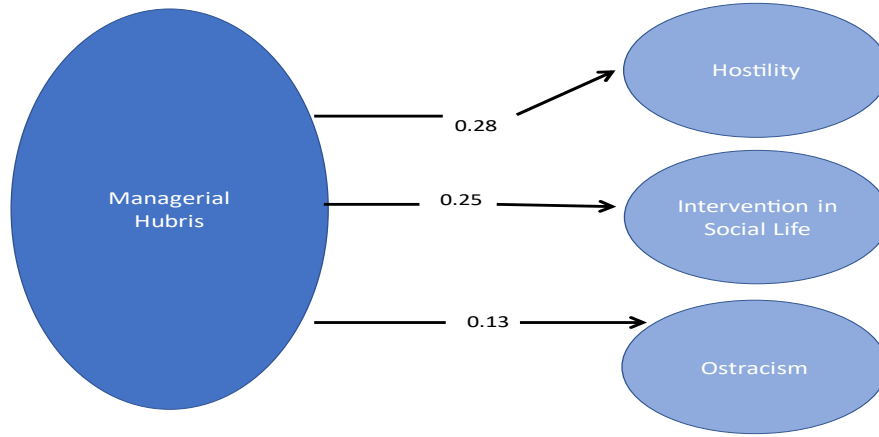


Table 5. Results of Structural Model Analysis

Hypotheses	γ / β	T-values	Results
Managerial Hubris → Hostility	$\gamma=0.28$	2.22	H₃ hypothesis supported
Managerial Hubris → Intervention in Social Life		2.06	H₂ hypothesis supported.
Managerial Hubris → Ostracism	$\gamma=0.13$	1.16	H₁ hypothesis not supported
Workplace Incivility → Differs related to title		.003	H₄ hypothesis supported.

5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The working conditions in today's business environment, which include high competition, uncertainty, and dynamism, require managers to develop different character traits and qualities, such as self-confidence, strategic decision-making ability, strong communication skills, and perfectionism. In addition, the individual traits of managers who have power sources such as expertise, status, and authority are expected to play critical roles in an organization's sustainable competitive advantage. However, in an organizational environment, individual characteristics such as excessive self-confidence, self-superiority, and self-admiration can sometimes lead managers to misuse their power or authority due to hubristic attitudes and tendencies. In other words, managers may exhibit more hubristic attitudes and behaviors in the organizations where the hierarchy is high, decision-making is concentrated in the upper echelons, and open communication is not structured. Managerial hubris tendency may be expected to emerge more frequently and predominantly in those narcissistic, highly egoistic, excessively perfectionist, highly critical of their environments, disliking their subordinates, and maintaining distant

interpersonal relationships with others. Managerial hubris is generally considered to be a positive component in companies' strategic decisions, marketing activities, mergers and acquisitions, and processes that require innovation and creativity. However, in the long term, managerial hubris can negatively affect the organizational climate, damage superior-subordinate- relations, enfeeble individuals' motivation and organizational commitment, and force affected employees to resign. In this context, it is expected to exert detrimental effects on an organizational environment and create workplace incivility.

In this study, employees at a state university were examined since, as the literature suggests, the hubristic managerial attitudes and behaviors are common at higher education institutions. Besides, the effects of managerial hubris on workplace incivility, considered to be one of the negative organizational consequences, were examined in the academic work environment. The present research showed that the hubristic attitudes and tendencies of managers could reveal many discourteous actions, such as belittling, contempt, talking behind others' back, intervening in social lives of employees, ostracizing employees, and interrupting colleagues when they are talking. The data obtained manifested that managerial hubris positively affected the hostility domain of workplace incivility. In this context, it can be stated that managerial hubris in a work environment can lead to behaviors such as digging someone else's back, trying to humiliate them, and psychological intimidation, which can be identified as the most negative aspects of incivility. In addition, the research findings indicated that managerial hubris positively affected the domain of incivility that interferes with individuals' social lives. Therefore, one may expect to see such examples as a manager with a high level of hubris may share confidential information about his/her employee's social life with others and lead to detrimental consequences in the employee's social life. These findings have some parallel consequences with the studies in literature. For example, Chillab et al. (2022) also found that toxic leadership styles have positive effect on all dimensions of workplace incivility. Besides, Yaşar et al. (2023) studies found out that arrogance has a significant effect on gossip behavior. McManus (2013) mentioned that managerial hubris lead to some unethical behaviors. Moreover, the study concluded that managerial hubris had no effect on the ostracism dimension of incivility, which showed that managerial hubris caused more negative consequences in the other two domains than in the domain of ostracism.

The present research emphasizes that managers who exhibit a hubristic tendency and also work as an academic and administrative staff member at management level of a university may be anticipated to engage in more workplace incivility, particularly in terms of hostility and intervention in their employees' social lives. Moreover, it is noticeable in the findings that there is a great likelihood of observing instances of managerial hubris at academic institutions, such as self-superiority, self-admiration, and excessive self-confidence. Therefore, academic and administrative managers were included the research, and it was determined that managerial hubris led to the formation of a workplace incivility at universities as well. In addition, according to the research findings, the perceptions of

workplace incivility of managers significantly differed according to their titles. This finding showed that the faculty members and managers working as administrative staff differently evaluated the uncivil attitudes and behaviors in their respective work environments. As a result, it can be recommended that academic and administrative managers working at the university where this research was conducted reduce hubristic attitudes and behaviors, some of which can be listed as sense of superiority, excessive self-confidence, and self-centeredness. This is among the ways discourteous actions, such as belittling, excluding, and disregarding, can be eliminated. Moreover, it is obvious that hubristic managerial attitudes and behaviors in academic organizations may lead to marred institutional prestige, deterioration of interpersonal relationships, and emergence of unscientific and unethical consequences. Hence, it is thought that it is important for managers at academic institutions to exhibit attitudes that are more tolerant and empathetic, to prioritize human values, and not to abuse their power and authority. For more comprehensive and representative results concerning the above parameters and domains, future studies may expand the research sample and include different universities. It is also advised to comparatively research the levels of managerial hubris at private and public universities.

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