

# **THRIVING AT WORK: EVIDENCES FROM TELECOM COMPANIES IN BALUCHISTAN**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the impacts of thriving at work on some selected work related attitudes (turnover intentions) and behaviors (workplace incivility). The data was collected from the telecommunication sector of Quetta City through a census. 237 individuals (N=237) from six telecommunication companies participated in the census. Results showed that thriving at work has significant negative relationship with turnover intentions and workplace incivility. Thus, it is concluded that thriving at work is a positive psychological resource to combat and overcome negative work related attitudes and behaviors. In the end, several practical implications and future research directions are discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Thriving at work, Turnover intentions, Workplace incivility & Telecom sector*

## **INTRODUCTION**

If you give your employees the chance to learn and grow, they will thrive and so will your organization (Spreitzer, Porath & Gibson, 2012). In the past few years, telecom industry of Pakistan has grown rapidly. This growth has not only made the role of telecom professionals perplexed (Hussain & Asif, 2012), but has also posed many other challenges. Among these, employees' retention is the significant one (Shoab, Noor, Tirmizi & Bashir, 2009). Due to changing nature of jobs in telecom sector, job dissatisfaction and turnover have elevated (Khan, 2014). Such increasing trends in turnover call for a change in the way the organizations treat their employees. Organizations, as advocated by positive organizational behavior, are now focusing on the development of strengths and psychological capabilities of their employees so that they may become more proactive, collaborative and responsible, and devoted ones (Bakker & Schaufeli, 2008). One of the emerging strengths and psychological capabilities is "thriving" (Paterson, Luthans, & Jeung, 2013). It is a psychological state which enables people to grow and develop in their respective circumstances (Spreitzer, Sutcliffe, Dutton, Sonenshein, & Grant, 2005).

Prior studies have revealed numerous benefits of thriving both at individual and organizational level (Porath., Spreitzer, Gibson,& Garnett, 2012; Spreitzer, Porath & Gibson, 2012 ; Keyes & Grzywacz, 2005; Quinn & Dutton, 2005; Christianson, Spreitzer, Sutcliffe & Grant, 2005; Pfeffer, 2010; Porath, Spreitzer & Gibson, 2008;

Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007; Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009). However, a critical review of the growing body of literature on thriving at work in general and telecommunication industry of Pakistan in particular, unearthed the fact that research in both areas is still scanty. We could only find one study (Abid, Zahra & Ahmed, 2015) on thriving in the context of Pakistan. This study examines how thriving mediates the relationships between perceived organizational support, innovative work behaviors and turnover intentions. Neither the dimensionality of uncivil behaviors and turnover intentions of employees in telecom sector has been examined nor did the impacts of thriving on turnover intentions and uncivil behaviors have been explored. Given this, present study attempts to determine the impacts of thriving at work on turnover intentions and uncivil behaviors.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Thriving

Thriving is a psychological state which encompasses learning (attainment and use of new skills) and vitality (sense of being energized and alive). Learning, the first component of thriving builds capacity and potential of people (Carver, 1998) which enable them to realize their full potential ( Spreitzer et al., 2005) and inculcates in them a feeling of improvement in whatsoever they do (Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012).Vitality, the other component of thriving generates energy and motivation among individuals which is an essential ingredient for many favorable outcomes such as: job performance (Carmeli , 2009), innovation (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009), creativity (Kark & Carmeli, 2009), and agility (Dries, Vantilborgh, & Peprmans, 2012). For individuals to thrive, both factors (Vitality and Learning) must function together just like an equation (Spreitzer et al.,2005). i.e. Learning + vitality = Thriving.

### Incivility

Incivility, in general, refers to the occurrence of apparently discourteous arguments. It can be defined more specifically as “an impolite, disregarding and divergent act having unclear intentions for hurting people, while deviating from the norms of respect and regards for others at the workplace” (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001). Incivility may include a vast variety of behaviors and may range from mild (not repaying a smile) to severe (intentionally hurting the feelings of others) (Johnson & Indvik, 2001). Normally, avoiding peer requests, not responding to telephone calls and mails, louder and harsh tone, arrogance, disgracing and demeaning acts towards others are some facets of incivility (Estes & Wang, 2008). Such uncivil behaviors represent a breach of workplace customs (Pearson, Andersson, & Wegner, 2001) and may lead to detrimental behaviors at workplace (Bibi, Karim & Din, 2013)

### **Turnover Intentions**

There are plenty of definitions of turnover intentions (TOI). Tett and Meyer defined TOI as the desire of leaving the current organization in search of another (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Later on, Sager and colleagues described it as ‘an attitudinal, decisional and behavioral process’ leading towards cautious turnover (Sager, Griffeth, & Hom, 1998). Krueger and Rouse explained TOI as a conscious choice for searching an alternative place to work (Krueger & Rouse, 1998). To sum up, TOI is the inclination of employees towards leaving their job or the organization they currently work for (Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004; Lacity, Lyer & Rudramuniyaiah., 2008; Lee, Hung & Chen, 2012).

### **HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Thriving at Work & Incivility**

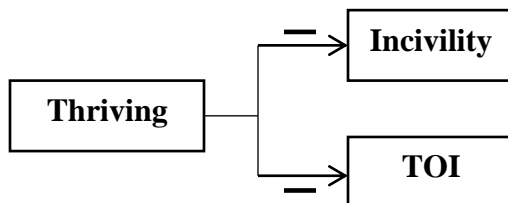
There are numerous benefits of thriving, both at individual and organizational levels. Learning & vitality dimensions of thriving reflect very important foundations of human behavior. Learning reflects ‘cognitive’ and vitality reflects ‘affective’ foundation of growth. That is why; thriving has been noted as a source of increasing the short-term individual functioning and long-term adaptability at workplaces (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Researchers also note that the progress and growth of people largely depend upon the degree of their positivity (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013). Learning and vitality inculcate mutual respect and trust in people which consequently foster a supportive and positive climate. People better recognize problems when they are in the phase of learning. Vitality, on the other hand generates energy and motivation (encompassing positive emotions) that help people to respond and effectively manage such problems (Carmeli & Spreitzer, 2009; Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013; Spreitzer et al., 2005). Hence, we propose;

#### **Thriving and Turnover Intentions**

Competing in the globalized economies and being adaptive to the changing technology and circumstances demand a highly skilled, committed and sustained work force (Becker, 2007). Ensuring employee commitment and retaining them is a difficult task. There are many determinants of retention. Among these, job satisfaction and work environment are important ones (Niazi, 2011). Researchers explain that employees’ intentions to leave, to a major extent, depend upon the degree of their satisfaction. It has been reported that higher levels of job satisfaction are negatively related to turnover intentions (Bartle, et al., 2002; Sahin, 2011). In addition, conducive and supportive work environment is another determinant of turnover intentions (Niazi, 2011). Weyland, in support of this notion states that when workplace embodies in itself the opportunities of skill enhancement and competency development, then employees grow and perform well (Weyland, 2011). This sense of growth and progression causes people to stay with their organizations

(Subramaniam et al., 2013). Thriving instills this momentum (Spreitzer et al 2005). Hence we assert that;

Figure 1: Research Model



## RESEARCH DESIGN

We delimited our study to the telecommunication companies operating in Quetta city. At present there are 6 telecom companies (five private and one public) in Quetta. The data collection process started with fixing the meetings with Regional Managers for the grant of permission regarding data collection. After their verbal permission, the HR/Personnel managers of each company were requested for the lists of employees in their companies. Subsequently, 6 information lists containing the necessary information of employees in each company were obtained. These information lists were merged together into one master list of target population which revealed that the total population for this study was 275 (N = 275). Before collecting data, this master list was tallied with prior information sheets to ensure that population is neither under counted nor over counted. This master list served as a 'sample frame'. A total of 237 respondents returned workable survey instrument which indicates a response rate of 86%.

## MEASURES

### Thriving at work

Thriving was gauged by 10 items scale developed by preitzer et al., (2012). These items were followed by a 7 point scale [strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), somewhat disagree (3), not sure (4), somewhat agree (5), agree (6) and strongly agree (7)]. The factor analysis of 'thriving scale' (Table: 1) represents excellent factor loadings, KMO and other criterions. The reliability coefficient of thriving scale was reported as ' $\alpha = 0.840$ .'

Table: 1 Factor Analysis of Thriving Scale

Scale items	Factor Loadings		KMO	$\alpha$
	Factor 1	Factor 2		
V-1	0.730		<b>.939</b>	<b>.840</b>
V-2	0.718			
V-3	0.801			
V-4	0.724			

V-5	0.721		
L-1		0.784	
L-2		0.769	
L-3		0.738	
L-4		0.705	
L-5		0.713	
<b>Eigen Values</b>		<b>% of variances explained</b>	
4.196		41.957	
1.242		12.418	

### Incivility

The level of incivility was measured by ‘workplace incivility scale’ developed by Cortina, et al., (2001). It is a seven items scale with five response options [never (1), very rarely (2), not sure (3), sometimes (4) and always (5)]. Factor analysis for workplace incivility shows excellent factor loadings, KMO and other requisite criterions (Table 2). The reported value ( $\alpha = 0.820$ ) of reliability coefficient of incivility scale verifies its excellent internal consistency in present context.

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Incivility Scale

Scale items	Factor Loadings	KMO	$\alpha$
I-1	0.722	<b>.836</b>	<b>.820</b>
I-2	0.705		
I-3	0.580		
I-4	0.704		
I-5	0.656		
I-6	0.596		
I-7	0.469		
<b>Eigen Values</b>		<b>% of Variance</b>	
3.132		44.745	

### Turnover intentions

Turnover intentions of respondents were gauged by a 3 items scale developed by Mobley, Horner, & Hollingsworth, (1978). 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5) followed each statement. The factor analysis for turnover intentions scale (Table 3) shows excellent factor loadings and KMO. Alongside, the coefficient of reliability ( $\alpha = 0.836$ ) also verifies high internal consistency.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Turnover Intentions Scale

Scale items	Factor Loadings	KMO	$\alpha$
T-1	0.701	.715	.836
T-2	0.785		
T-3	0.776		
Eigen Values		% of Variances	
2.262		75.410	

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Keeping in view the nature of study, a variety of analysis techniques were run. First of all, the descriptive statistics (*mean, SD, skewness and kurtosis*) of major variables were calculated (table 5). The reported values of the distribution parameters (skewness & kurtosis) of all variables lie within the acceptable range of  $\pm 2$  which indicate normal distributions of each. The composite mean values of all variables as shown in table 5 indicate the magnitude of their prevalence in telecom sector. For instance, the mean value of thriving (4.646) corresponds to “somewhat agree (5)” on 7 point likert scale indicating a positive state (near to the positive end of rating scale). Similarly, the magnitude of other variables can also be observed from the reported composite means of other variables. Table 4 also contains the correlation analysis. As expected, thriving was found negatively associated with incivility ( $r = -.205, p < 0.01$ ) and turnover intentions ( $r = -.267, p < 0.01$ ). However, a positive association was found between incivility and turnover intentions ( $r = .525, p < 0.01$ ). We also compared the magnitude of thriving on the basis of selected demographic variables. When compared on the basis of gender, it was found that male and female employees of telecom sector in Quetta city do not differ in terms of thriving ( $t = 1.012, p > 0.05$ ). Similarly, thriving level of employees do not differ on the basis of experience ( $F = .199, p > 0.01$ ). However, thriving varies with age ( $F = 13.511, P < 0.01$ ).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	Skewness	Kurtosis	Mean	SD
1.Thriving	1			-1.165	0.541	4.646	1.082
2.Incivility	-.205**	1		0.469	-0.856	2.494	.7526
3.Turnover Intentions	-.285**	.525**	1	0.561	-0.069	2.587	1.110

\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ , two tailed,  $N = 237$

Table 5: Regression Analyses

Model 1 (Thriving → Incivility)				
R <sup>2</sup>	Sβ	t	F	DW
0.042	-0.205	-3.206*	10.278**	1.725
Model 1 (Thriving → Turnover Intentions)				
R <sup>2</sup>	Sβ	t	F	DW
0.082	-0.286	-4.564*	20.827**	1.609

\*= p < 0.05, \*\* = p < 0.001

Thirdly, regression analyses were run to determine the impacts of thriving on incivility and turnover intentions. Table 6 carries the results of these analyses. Two models were constructed for this purpose. Model one ascertains the impacts of thriving on incivility. Results show that thriving significantly predicts incivility ( $\beta = -0.205$ ,  $t = -3.206$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). But, thriving caused a relatively little proportion of variation in incivility ( $R^2 = 0.042$ ,  $F = 10.278$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). In model two, turnover intentions were predicted on the basis of thriving. Results verified that thriving is a significant predictor of turnover intentions ( $\beta = -0.286$ ,  $t = -4.564$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thriving accounted for 8.2% variance in turnover intentions ( $R^2 = 0.082$ ,  $F = 20.826$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Based on these evidences, the articulated hypotheses ( $H_1$  &  $H_2$ ) are accepted and it is concluded that thriving is a positive resource that combats with negative attitudes and behaviors.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Building on the assumptions of socially embedded model of thriving at work (Spreitzer et al., 2005), this study investigated the interrelationships among thriving at work, incivility and turnover. Two hypotheses were developed for testing and both received enough empirical support to be accepted. The rationale behind articulating these assumptions was the attributes of thriving. As of Spreitzer et al., (2005), thriving has many positive implications. For instance, prior studies have proven it as a positive resource which combats with several undesirable work related attitudes and behaviors. Results of present study are in line with previous studies thereby supporting the theory of thriving. We, in hypothesis one claimed a negative relationship between thriving & incivility. Results support this hypothesis. This may be because of the fact that thriving leaves a positive impact on the workplace (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013). Those who thrive are supportive and respectful to others (Spreitzer et al., 2005). Incivility occurs when mutual respect is absent from workplaces. Thriving enables people to exchange positivity (in terms of words and actions both) which eventually reduces incivility. That is why a negative correlation was found between thriving and incivility.

We, in  $H_2$  proposed that thriving would also be negatively associated with turnover intentions. Results also supported this notion. It is argued that employees' intentions to leave organizations are determined by many factors such as job satisfaction, supportive

environment and availability of the opportunities for personal growth and development. Thriving enables employees to capitalize upon the opportunities to grow and develop (Spreitzer, Porath, & Gibson, 2012) and also fosters a supportive environment (Liu & Bern-Klug, 2013). These factors increase the satisfaction and commitment level of employees by virtue of which turnover decreases. On the basis of this discussion, we conclude that thriving at work is a viable psychological resource which instills positivity in the veins of organization and helps mitigating the detrimental attitudes and behaviors. One of the major theoretical contributions of this study is the theoretical advancement that this study makes in existing body of literature on thriving, workplace incivility and turnover intentions.

This study is first of its kind which has explored the relationship of thriving, workplace incivility and turnover intentions. Hence, the conclusions drawn may be of significant use for academicians and practitioners. Organizations can provide their employees the opportunities to grow and develop. By doing so, a conducive environment can be created which would help overcoming negative energies (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). Thriving at work, as proved by this study, has emerged one of the important factors that may help in combating with problematic issues. Hence we recommend that the firms should ensure opportunities to learn and grow. As of every research, the findings of this study are subject to several limitations. The delimitations of this study (sector, variables, scope etc.) are its major limitations. Therefore, we recommend future studies to expand the horizon of research on thriving by going beyond such limitations.

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