

Gendered Performative Resilience: Workplace Incivility, Emotional Labour and Women's Professional Lives in Bollywood.

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Abstract

The study of Bollywood is mostly done from the perspective of representation, stardom and cultural influence, and the working conditions of women in film production is comparatively studied less. This paper takes a theoretical look at gendered incivility as an occupational experience and proposes a theory that links casual mistreatment to emotional labour and professional self-presentation and psychological vulnerability. It builds upon the scholarship on workplace incivility, selective incivility, emotional labour, gendered creative labour and performative resilience, to create the concept of gendered performative resilience, which is defined as the visible performance of composure, adaptability and professional collaboration when resisting workplace adverse conditions is deemed to be costly. The paper makes a case for why workplace mistreatment is important, both because of what happens in the moment, but also because of the occupational calculations that account for women's reactions to mistreatment. The primary mechanism that connects gendered mistreatment to emotional-labour demands and performative resilience is perceived costs of resistance. Publicly documented information on women working in Hindi cinema is not used as representative empirical data. The paper suggests that precarity of employment, informal employment networks, and the visibility of the job are likely to accelerate the process while professional agency, supportive networks, and credible institutional mechanisms may slow down the process. The paper is an attempt to draw attention away from the issue of whether women are resilient to the issue of why resilience may be a working requirement in gendered creative labour, and reconnects workplace incivility research to cultural-labour and cinema studies...

Keywords: Workplace Incivility; Gendered Creative Labour; Emotional Labour; Performative Resilience; Bollywood

Introduction

The perspective of stardom, representation, glamour and cultural influence are with regularity taken to Bollywood. But cinema is also a place in which people work, negotiate authority and rely upon professional relationships for the future opportunities. This labour perspective turns the focus away from the images of women as film representations towards women as gendered film workers with different professional experiences due to the conditions of their work, their relationships with others in the workplace, and their access to authority (Mannil, 2020; Patel & Aravindh, 2026).

The concept of workplace incivility describes relatively low intensity behaviour that is based on a lack of respect for another and whose intent to harm is not clear (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). This may involve communication in a dismissive way, condescending, excluding or interrupting the person and have negative occupational outcomes (Cortina et al., 2001; Schilpzand et al., 2016). Importantly, seemingly neutral incivility can perpetuate inequalities. In an interesting conceptualization, Cortina (2008) considers selective incivility as a mechanism by which gendered and racialized disadvantage can be perpetuated through not-so-clear interpersonal behavior (Cortina et al., 2013). Additionally, McCord et al. (2018) show that women's experiences of workplace mistreatment are also different from the general workplace mistreatment experience, highlighting the importance of recognising gendered mistreatment as distinct from other forms of workplace mistreatment.

It is especially relevant to Bollywood as film work is often project driven, networked and based on professional credentials. Gendered precarity can be reproduced when jobs are project-based (Leung et al., 2015) and when job-

finding is informal (Pulignano et al., 2023), as revealed by research on creative labour. When these things are in play, it might seem like it is the responsibility of the person to challenge the strong personality or decision-maker. Mistreatment in the workplace can then influence the way that women express anger, frustration and disagreement. Emotional labour is one of the explanations. Emotional labour was defined by Hochschild (1983) as regulating feelings and emotional expression as expected by the job, and Grandey (2000) introduced an emotion-regulation framework of how employees regulate emotional expression. However, emotional labour is not enough for the visible performance of coping and adaptation to professional insecurity. The concept of resilience has also been explored in relation to gendered resilience and cultural labour, which indicates that resilience is a capacity that can be performed publicly under precarious conditions (Gill & Orgad, 2018; Newsinger & Serafini, 2021; Pasquinelli & Sjöholm, 2015).

This paper builds upon this literature by theorizing how women's experiences of workplace adversity, because of the gendered expectations for their jobs and the costs of resisting them, involve them in a visible enactment of composure, adaptability and professional cooperativeness that is professionally consequential, here termed gendered performative resilience. It builds upon previous research on performative resilience, and links this to the gendered nature of incivility and emotional labour within film production. The information that can be obtained from documentary materials is presented in the form of a case study, and not as representative empirical data because it is based on publicly available information about women in Hindi cinema.

The paper asks:

How can gendered incivility in Bollywood workplaces be theorized as a demand of emotional labour and performative resilience and what could be the implications of such an incivility on psychological health of women?

The paper's main contribution is to theorise the mechanism between gendered workplace mistreatment, emotional-labour demands and performative resilience, namely perceived occupational cost of resistance. It suggests the following route:

Gendered occupational power asymmetry leads to gendered incivility/mistreatment on the job, which then results in perceived occupational costs of resistance, an emotional-labour demand, gendered performative resilience, emotional dissonance and identity strain, and potentially psychological vulnerability.

Professional agency and supportive networks, credible institutional mechanisms will possibly reduce this pathway, whereas occupational precarity and informal professional networks will possibly reinforce it, and public visibility will possibly mediate it. The argument is not that everyone who is mistreated is resilient, nor is mistreatment in the workplace necessarily traumatic. Instead, the paper questions the need to be resilient, given that resisting is seen as "expensive".

2. Bollywood as a Gendered Creative Industry Workplace

Traditionally Bollywood studies have focused on representation, spectatorship, stardom and popular culture. A labour-oriented approach, however, turns the focus from women as the objects of the film away from what women represent in the film, to the conditions of women's involvement as film product labor. Mannil (2020) has proposed that Indian film scholarship must be more explicit in considering the gendered nature of film work and make it more explicit to place women's film labour in the context of wider patterns of precarious, flexible and insecure employment. Her analysis of the Women in Cinema Collective also shows that gender in Indian cinema is not distinct from labour and issues of professional organisation and collective action.

Film production is also distinct from traditional organizational environments because jobs are often contingent on specific projects and working relationships may span multiple projects. Creative industries research in the UK indicates that freelance working, project working and informal recruitment are significant aspects of creative work and can help perpetuate gender inequality (Leung et al., 2015). In recent studies of Hindi popular cinema, gendered recruitment patterns, the informal networks, and career mobility and negotiation around creative authority are also found to be central features of women's agency in the workplace (Patel & Aravindh, 2026).

This paper is thus based on the difference between women as film subjects and women as film workers. Being visible in the public eye doesn't necessarily mean you have power as an occupationist. An actress can have a large fan-base on many levels and still have to rely on the support of producers, directors, casting, co-stars and professional networks. Relationships and reputation with industry players may therefore be a part of the career's future, and resistance to industry actors may have repercussions.

This calculation can be further influenced by gender. Expectations of women's professional conduct may be assessed in terms of collaboration, agreeableness and emotional stability. Thus the same action of disagreement can have multiple meanings, depending on who does it and how assertiveness is understood in the occupational culture. The professional costs of resistance may therefore be affected by the gendered expectations of occupations.

Workplace incivility needs to be distinguished from larger scale gendered workplace inequalities as well. Incivility is defined as behaviour that relatively low intensity interpersonal communication that "offends the other

person's sense of respect" and that has "ambiguous intent" (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). It should NOT be confused with discrimination, harassment, unequal pay, unequal access to resources. The present paper focuses specifically on interpersonal dynamics of dismissive treatment, competence questioning, exclusion and reputational labelling that could be situated at the intersection of common working interactions and gendered mistreatment.

The studies of women's film collectives in India also indicate a possibility of gendered labour problems creating collective action to contest some power relations in traditionally male-dominated production spaces (Mannil, 2020; Raj & Suresh, 2026). While the authors' study is not about Bollywood, it clearly shows that women can organise, negotiate and challenge the occupational structure, not merely experience it, as Raj and Suresh do in their study in the Malayalam film industry.

Hence, Bollywood needs to be interpreted as a gendered space of creativity where relations among people, precarious employment, and professional standing and occupational power coincide and are entangled. These conditions set the organizational context in which workplace mistreatment can take on a broader professional meaning and wherein the management of emotional expression becomes pertinent.

3. Workplace Incivility and Gendered Workplace Mistreatment

As low intensity behaviors that go against norms of mutual respect and include unclear intent to harm, incivility is defined by Andersson and Pearson (1999). It is distinct from harassment, bullying and aggression, but can encompass these behaviours (Schilpzand et al., 2016).

Cortina et al. (2001) showed that incivility in the workplace has measurable effects on the individuals involved, and subsequent research differentiated it from other related concepts like bullying, aggression or harassment (Schilpzand et al., 2016).

Although these actions of incivility seem innocuous in the workplace, they can actually be a hidden expression of sexism and racism, says Cortina (2008). The argument is elaborated on the concept of selective incivility, which suggests that socially disadvantaged groups might be more exposed to uncivil treatment than other groups even though the action seems innocuous at the surface. Cortina et al. (2013) determined that there was an impact of target gender and race on vulnerability to uncivil treatment, and that it was related to intention to leave the organization.

However, understanding the mistreatment of women in the workplace is complex and fraught with issues of caution. In a meta-analysis of harassment, discrimination, bullying and incivility, McCord et al. (2018) found that while women were significantly more likely to experience sex-related mistreatment than men, perceptions of other forms of mistreatment were similar by gender. An interaction, therefore, cannot be defined as a gendered interaction solely by the fact that it is directed at a female; it must be a gendered interaction in relation to the behaviour, power relationship and expectations of professional conduct in relation to women.

This is especially significant in Bollywood. A dismissive comment, an interruption or a competence challenge can be instances of incivility if it is not respectful to the profession. However, if there is unequal remuneration, insufficient facilities, narrow opportunity or a larger scale structural discrimination, this should not be considered incivility. These can be instances of gendered mistreatment at work but also be analytically distinct. Therefore, in the present paper, the term gendered workplace mistreatment is used as the broader category and gendered workplace incivility as a category of interpersonal behaviour that more closely meets the defining characteristics of incivility.

Four forms of this type of degradation stand out in the Bollywood context: status degradation, epistemic dismissal, reputational sanction, and material/professional inequity. These are not suggested to be a set of categories of incivility but rather forms in which gendered occupational power can be felt. Status degradation refers to the positioning of women as professionally second-class; epistemic dismissal refers to questioning or devaluation of women's knowledge and competence; reputational sanction refers to negative professional labelling after resisting; and material or professional inequality refers to unequal access to resources, facilities or opportunities. Some may include incivility and some may be other related structural or organizational inequalities.

The difference in this sense makes it more evident the theoretical interest of this paper in perceived occupational cost. It is not just the question of whether a woman is treated disrespectfully, but whether she can stand up to it without jeopardizing her career, reputation or future job. The consequences of an apparently small incident of incivility become more serious in a project-based industry where the power hierarchy and job insecurity are unequal.

A study of women's film collectives in India also shows that the issue of labour-related shortcomings of women can lead to collective action to question entrenched power dynamics in the typically male-dominated production sphere (Mannil, 2020; Raj & Suresh, 2026). If not Bollywood, the Women in Cinema Collective in Malayalam cinema is an example of how collective feminist action can be a means to challenge conditions of inequality, harassment and control within Indian cinema. This evidence also indicates that women are not just victims of the occupational structure, but can organize around it, negotiate, and challenge it.

4. Emotional labour and gendered performative resilience.

The interpersonal encounter is not the end of an issue of mistreatment in the workplace. Employees also need to control the emotions they elicit from these events, especially if it involves showing anger, frustration or disagreement that could impact their working life. Emotional labour is an important framework with which to analyse this process. Emotional labour was first defined by Hochschild (1983) in terms of managing feelings and emotions in line with professional expectations. Later, Grandey (2000) redefined the concept from an emotion-regulation standpoint, focusing on employee's emotional regulation in response to situational and organizational demands in order to display emotions. Also, Grandey and Melloy (2017) show that emotional labour is not always a uniform occupational requirement, but rather is a multilevel process.

This can be especially relevant if the emotions that arise from mistreatment in the workplace don't align with the ethos of the worker. A dismissive attitude or doubts about competence might make a woman feel angry or frustrated, and also feel that expressing such feelings would hurt a professional relationship. The tension between experienced emotion and professionally appropriate expression is what makes emotional labor important in service provision: surface acting is defined as trying to suppress internal emotional state, or regulate outward emotional expression while leaving the internal state largely unchanged; deep acting is defined as trying to change the emotional state, or regulate outward emotional expression, while trying to keep the internal emotional state largely the same. The meta-analysis by Hülshager and Schewe (2011) revealed that surface acting and emotion-rule dissonance had weak relationships with poorer well-being, while deep acting had much weaker relationships with poorer well-being outcomes.

The question raised here is what might occur when emotional regulation is paired with the need to project a professional "man-up" in an insecure and gendered environment?

Therefore, emotional labour and psychological resilience should be separated from each other.

A second analysis is performative resilience. Adopting an austerity and insecurity paradigm, Newsinger and Serafini (2021) explore how cultural practitioners publicly enact their resilience, suggesting that resilience may serve as a performance of adaptability in cultural labour in addition to being a psychological ability.

This paper builds on this view and introduces the more specific idea of gendered performative resilience, which is a performative expression of composure, adaptability and professional cooperation that is visible to others, but occurs when the gendered expectations in the occupations involved and the perceived costs of resisting these expectations make the performative expression professionally consequential for the woman who is experiencing some sort of adversity in her workplace. The idea does not supplant the existing ideas of resilience or emotional labour, but rather points to a point where the management of emotions and the professional management of continued ability and composure become indistinguishable.

Performative resilience is also not "gendered" surface acting. The specific programmatic changes to emotional expression is what is called surface acting, and the general programmatic changes are what are called performative resilience, which can include emotional restraint, continued cooperativeness, adaptation, avoidance of conflict, or the ability to maintain a professional demeanor in the face of negative treatment. Therefore, there can be a performative aspect of resilience, in the form of surface acting, but it is not synonymous.

The gendered dimension is important because notions about women's professional conduct can have an impact on the meaning and consequences of the expression of emotions. When women are supposed to be co-operative and agreeable, assertiveness and disagreement or anger can have different connotations. The pressure to appear calm may be greater when it comes time to challenge strong personalities, as this could result in professional labeling or banishment. However, performative resilience also comes not only from personal characteristics but from the combined effect of the nature of the work, gendered expectations for professionals, and the perceived professional risks.

This does not mean that resilience is necessarily evidence of powerlessness. A woman who is powerfully in control of herself in a challenging work environment may be acting with a rather high level of agency to preserve her career, her reputation or her professional relationships. Meanwhile, the requirement to perform resilience could also expose the limitations within which this agency operates. When flexibility is required for survival at work, resilience can serve as a tool to deal with structural inequality and also become a tool by which inequality exists at the micro-level as a matter of everyday routine.

This is key in creative project work. If the job is short-term and prospects for the future rely on professional contacts and reputation, the effects of opposition may be not just from the opposition itself, but from the actions of the professional community. Emotional labour may thus require the management of emotions if the job is not guaranteed, rather, it is strategically managed for job continuity. This is a wider occupational performance that is encompassed by performative resilience.

The proposed relationship can therefore be expressed as:

Gendered workplace mistreatment → perceived occupational cost of resistance → emotional-labour demand → gendered performative resilience

This track is not the only track that runs through the pathway. Not all women who experience work-based mistreatment will enact resilience, and not all enactments of resilience will result in psychological costs. Alternative responses can be sought through professional agency, supportive networks and institutional protection. On the other hand, persistent suppression of emotions can have more serious ramifications when employees have few options to address the cause of mistreatment.

From emotional dissonance (the difference between what a worker feels and what she is supposed to show) comes its relevance to psychological well-being. The results of Hülshager & Schewe (2011) suggest that emotion-rule dissonance and surface acting are linked to poor well-being. The paper does not suggest that performative resilience is directly harmful to the psychological well-being, however, a constant act of resilience can be psychologically demanding when it involves continuing to suppress emotions experienced or to elicit tension between the experienced identity and the publicly displayed professional identity.

Gendered performative resilience can then be used as the link between interpersonal treatment and the wider structures of work. Incivility involves how people interact with one another day-to-day, emotional labour involves managing emotional responses, and performative resilience refers to the fact that managing emotions might be manifested as a performance when resistance is understood as risky. Within the Bollywood setting, this can be a mechanism of turning the focus from experience of hardship at work to the necessity of being professionally composed may become gendered creative work.

5. Illustrative Documentary Evidence from Bollywood

The theoretical framework can be explored by reading the publicly recorded discourses on women working in Hindi cinema. The accounts are provided as illustrative documentation not as empirical data. Their observations do not aim to capture prevalence or causal effects of workplace incivility across Bollywood but rather to demonstrate the only mechanisms mentioned above: status differentiation, epistemic dismissal, reputational sanction and material or professional inequality.

5.1 Status Differentiation

Bhumi Pednekar has admitted facing gender bias while working with male co-stars as there was “always a feeling that the man is more superior” and she had often felt “number two” (Panchal, 2023). Similarly, Kriti Sanon has said that women actors are “taken for granted” and given less importance on the sets of the movies (Sharma, 2026). These accounts, taken together, represent an example of the ways in which perceived occupational status differs between men and women but should not be presumed to be incivility.

5.2 Epistemic Dismissal

“Growing up in a family that was largely patriarchal, I would see instances of women being ‘mansplained’ by men while working as an assistant director, or being told that she wasn’t educated in certain things because she was a woman,” says Kiran Rao (TOI Entertainment Desk, 2024). The account describes an example of epistemic dismissal here defined as the downgrade of professional knowledge or competence via gendered assumptions. A condescending tone in the dismissal can be seen by selective-incivility (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013).

5.3 Reputational Sanction

Women who oppose directors or producers are said to be “difficult to work with” and when women speak up against the industry, they are reported to be suppressing their own views as it may have “professional consequences”, said Mandana Karimi (TNN, 2018). As her story attests, the suggested mechanism is:

Resistance → anticipated reputational cost → self-regulation.

The example does not provide a systematic punishment throughout Bollywood; it does illustrate a possible difference in how workers may express or try to suppress disagreement when they feel they may have serious consequences in their professional careers.

5.4 Material and Professional Inequality

Nushratt Bharuccha has talked about the differences between the women's and men's facilities and opportunities (Entertainment Desk, 2025). These experiences are not necessarily defined as “incivilities,” but as material and professional inequality and are contextual evidence of differences in occupational status. Dia Mirza has also commented on the common sexism in which women's time and professional worth is not taken into account equally (Lifestyle Desk, 2026).

Combined, these reports illustrate gendered mistreatment in the work place can happen in several ways, but often they do overlap to some degree. Some are incivility in the sense of the term and some are considered as a wider form of inequality within the organization. But more significantly, the accounts show when professional self-regulation might be required: when one's challenge of workplace treatment is ‘threatening to reputation, relationships or future opportunities’ then one's ability to be composed becomes something of an occupational strategy.

Documentary evidence therefore is illustrative, not empirical proof, of the path forward from mistreatment to perceived costs of resisting to emotional regulation to the visible performance of professional resilience.

Theoretical model and Propositions.

The foregoing sections show that the issue of the mistreatment of individuals in the Bollywood set can not be reduced to individual interpersonal encounters. Its meaning is captured in the combination of gendered occupational power, employment insecurity, emotional regulation and professional self-presentation. Therefore, the paper suggests the following theoretical journey:

Gendered occupational power asymmetry → gendered workplace incivility / mistreatment → perceived occupational cost of resistance → emotional-labour demands → gendered performative resilience → emotional dissonance and identity strain → potential psychological vulnerability

The model is based on three well-developed bodies of scholarship: the study of workplace incivility (Andersson & Pearson, 1999); the study of emotional-labour regulation (Grandey, 2000); and the study of cultural-labour and performative resilience (Newsinger & Serafini, 2021). Newsinger and Serafini's formulation is significant, because it shows that resilience does not just exist as an individualised psychological State, but as a publicly enacted sign of adaptability in cultural labour.

Proposition 1: Gendered Occupational Power and Workplace Mistreatment

P1: When interpersonal behaviour in the workplace is ambiguous, there is greater potential for it to be perceived as mistreatment by the individual, especially when there is a power imbalance between people based on gender.

Incivility in the workplace does not necessarily signal a gendered target – it can be a man. Its gendered nature relies on the interplay of behaviour and its social context. Apparently benign behaviours, like ignoring, interrupting, challenging or misjudging, or treating someone disrespectfully, can create gendered disadvantage as shown by selective-incivility research (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013). The second study found that target gender and race had an impact on levels of vulnerability due to uncivil treatment and that intention to leave was related to such experiences.

P1 recognizes that not all conflict situations in the workplace are sexist; sexual gender power imbalance is a contextual condition which determines the nature of interpersonal conflict:

Proposition 2: Occupational Precarity and the Cost of Resistance

P2: Higher occupational precarity creates higher perceived professional costs against resisting gendered workplace mistreatment.

The impact of work place mistreatment is influenced in part by what choices the worker has. If the job is stable and workplace grievance procedures are available, there is a relatively low occupational risk in challenging inappropriate conduct. However, in project-based cultural work, reputation and professional relationships and ongoing access to networks may be a factor in employment.

Resistance is then an occupation's calculation. A woman might identify that an interaction is inappropriate, but that if she speaks out, there may be future opportunities that could suffer. This is not to say that there is no agency; on the contrary, agency is a phenomenon that must be understood inside an occupational structure in which the costs of specific types of resistance may be unevenly distributed. While this is not necessarily regular in Bollywood, it is evident from the case of Mandana Karimi, a woman who was branded “difficult to work with” by imposing powerful industry figures.

Proposition 3: Perceived Occupational Cost and Gendered Performative Resilience

P3: Gendered performative resilience is more likely to occur when a woman feels that her cost at work is higher for resisting gendered mistreatment at work.

Proposition 4: Performative Resilience, Emotional Dissonance and Psychological Vulnerability

Psychological vulnerability is more likely to be associated with gendered sustained performative resilience in cases of sustained emotional dissonance or identity strain.

A worker might be able to hold onto their composure to hold off on a tough encounter and preserve working relationships. The dilemma comes when there's a conflict between emotions and visible performance as it happens again and again.

The relevant mechanism is emotional-labour scholarship. Emotional labour is discussed by Grandey (2000) as emotion regulation and Hülshager and Schewe (2011) link surface acting and emotion-rule dissonance with the decrease in well-being. It is not that emotional regulation is bad, but that having too many mismatches between experienced and demonstrated emotion can come at a price.

By experiencing and feeling anger, humiliation or frustration repeatedly but appearing unaffected, a woman may feel emotionally dissonant. If the professional role she plays in public is in opposition to what she feels like in her experience, identity strain can occur. It is therefore suggested that the relationship be:

Emotional conflict can occur in the workplace because of mistreatment, which may necessitate the professional display of emotional control, which can result in emotional dissonance that can lead to psychological vulnerability. This is a hypothetical statement and not an empirical statement about Bollywood actresses. Primary research is needed to determine prevalence, intensity or clinical consequences.

Proposition 5: Agency and Institutional Protection as Moderating Conditions

For P5, a strong connection between gendered workplace mistreatment and gendered performative resilience is reduced by professional agency, supportive networks and credible institutional mechanisms.

The more workers feel they have no other options but self-regulation, the more the concept of performative resilience is required for their work. Perceived cost of resistance may be lowered through supportive professional networks, credible institutional redress and adequate career autonomy, while isolation, precarity, and reliance on powerful gatekeepers may raise the cost of resistance.

The five propositions can be integrated into a single sequence:

Gendered occupational power asymmetry

↓

Gendered workplace incivility/mistreatment

↓

Perceived occupational cost of resistance

↓

Emotional-labour demands

↓

Gendered performative resilience

↓

Emotional dissonance / identity strain

↓

Potential psychological vulnerability

This relationship is contingent on precarity and a lack of formality in the sphere of work, as well as in the public sphere, where the potential consequences of resistance are felt to be greater. Professional agency, collective support and institutional protection, on the other hand, can reduce the pathway.

The main theoretical idea that does not appear is that mistreatment at work is harmful to women, or the creation of the concept of performative resilience that already has a cultural-labour literature (Newsinger & Serafini, 2021). Instead, the contribution is to articulate the link between gendered mistreatment at work and the public display of resilience as a response to it, and the intervening process of occupational cost. This formulation also incorporates the ideas of agency and constraint in the concept of resilience. It can help women manage demanding workplaces, safeguard relationships and maintain employment options, and the necessity to act resilient could signal that workplace conditions are still not being addressed. The model then asks a different question: When is resilience something women have to show, as opposed to regardless of the conditions of their work?

7. Discussion, Theoretical Contribution, Limitations and Conclusion

The theoretical model presented in this paper links the concepts of workplace incivility, gendered workplace inequality, emotional labour and cultural-labour resilience. Its central contribution is to articulate why seemingly at low levels of interpersonal mistreatment, professional relationships, one's reputation, and future employment can become significant consequences for women. Research on workplace-incivility shows that seemingly minor interpersonal violations have an impact on the work experience, while selective-incivility scholarship illustrates how the same type of behaviour can reinforce gendered inequalities even when intent is unclear (Cortina, 2008; Cortina et al., 2013; Schilpzand et al., 2016).

The paper identifies perceived occupational cost of resistance as the pathway between mistreatment and emotional regulation and performative resilience. If women feel that challenging disrespect could hurt their careers, their reputation, or future employment, having a professional demeanor may be an occupational tactic. From an emotional-labour perspective, it is further suggested that over time emotional dissonance and certain types of surface acting may be linked to diminished wellbeing (Zapf, 2002; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011). This argument is not about the negative aspects of emotional regulation per se, but about the impact of emotional regulation on the consequences of occupational survival.

7.1 Theoretical Contribution

The focus of the paper is the theoretical contribution of the concept of gendered performative resilience. The paper proposes ways in which such acting out of resilience can be gendered when women are facing challenges at work where resistance would be seen as a professional liability.

The paper consequently makes three related contributions. It is first, a scholarship that is extended to the context of the project in Indian film production which is defined as workplace incivility. Secondly, it clarifies perceived occupational cost of resistance as an intervening mechanism between gendered workplace mistreatment and emotional self-regulation. Third, it brings performative-resilience scholarship one step further by highlighting how "composed" and "resilient" behaviors that are enacted on display can serve as a professional tactic and/or a means of coping with gendered job restrictions.

This formulation also challenges the traditional notions of resilience. Being able to appear calm does not necessarily mean that someone is psychologically healthy. It could be the real adaptation, some kind of strategic

self-protection, or emotional work. Gendered performative resilience can thus be considered an agency as well as constraint: it can enable women to maintain their working connections and opportunities, and at the same time act as an indicator of the need to perform in the workplace.

7.2 Contribution to Cinema and Creative-Labour Studies

The paper adds to cinema scholarship by moving it away from the focus on women as performers and as the representations of cultures and towards women as workers in the cinema production. The gender inequalities can be seen in the working relationships, professional status, and collective organization of the labourers in Indian film-labour unions (Mannil, 2020; Raj & Suresh, 2026). The literature on the creative industries also indicates the role of project-based working and informal labour market entry and professional networks in gendered precarity (Leung et al., 2015; Pulignano et al., 2023).

This is an extension of that literature, as the present framework links these occupational conditions to interpersonal treatment and emotional self-presentation. Bollywood is then not only an exemplar of a distinctly exceptional place of sexism but a handy example for studying the interplay of gender, precarity and interaction and emotional regulation in cultural work. Examples of such mechanisms are shown in the documentary accounts provided in Section 5 and are not considered to be representative evidence.

7.3 Implications for future research and limitations.

The propositions formulated in this paper need further testing. Interviews might explore how women define professional disagreement as opposed to gendered disrespect, and how reputation or job impact their resistance. Linkages between workplace incivility and the perceived occupational cost, emotional labour, and performative resilience and well-being could be explored in survey research. Since performative resilience is a concept that has yet to be established, future research should also explore the extent to which workers differentiate between gendered performative resilience and emotional labour, surface acting, impression management and psychological resilience.

Comparative study between various film industries in the country would also determine if the proposed mechanism differs with the occupational status, career stage, employment security and access to professional networks. Bollywood cannot be taken as a representative example of Indian cinema, as other regional film industries may show different patterns of the interplay between gender, collective organization and occupational authority.

There are some limitations of the paper. First it is theoretical and does not include any primary interviews, surveys or observational data and the propositions cannot support prevalence nor causal relationships between workplace incivility and psychological outcomes among women in Bollywood. Second, documentary accounts are selective, through the lens of journalism and therefore cannot be assumed to be representative of the broader industry context. Third, some of the structural arguments are based on comparative research conducted in the creative industries of other countries, and hence offer a theoretical background but not empirical evidence on Bollywood. Finally, the paper does not offer a comprehensive analysis of the intersections: class, caste, age and the position of people in their occupations may affect their experiences of workplace mistreatment as well as their capacity to resist.

Such restrictions support the theory-building nature of the paper, and do not invalidate the proposed relationships as being empirical tests.

7.4 Conclusion

When these seemingly trivial dismissals, questioning of competences, differentiation of status and labelling of reputation in the creative work are gendered and project-based, workplace incivility has a broader occupational significance. This paper has suggested that the analytic trajectory should not be **mistreatment** → **harm**, but rather:

Gendered treatment of the work place → **Perceived occupational treatment of resistance** → **Emotional-labour demands** → **Gendered performative resilience** → **Potential emotional dissonance and psychological vulnerability**.

The main contribution of the paper is therefore to draw attention from the question of resilience's in women to why resilience might be professionally necessary in women. However, performing gendered resilience can be useful to women in challenging workplaces, and can also uncover unaddressed structural disparities over time.

The Bollywood view is that of the female performer and worker at the same time, that is, the professional visibility of females does not automatically equate with occupational power. Exploring the process of women's coping with mistreatment, reputation, emotional expression, and career insecurity will offer a foundation for future empirical research and for investigating the role of resilience as a coping strategy to survive in the work environment..

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