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STOP THE MADNESS! COLLEGE FACULTY AND STUDENT
PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM INCIVILITY

by

Christina M. Nutt

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of

Olivet Nazarene University

School of Graduate and Continuing Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of

Doctor of Education

in

Ethical Leadership

May 2013

STOP THE MADNESS! COLLEGE FACULTY AND STUDENT
PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM INCIVILITY

by

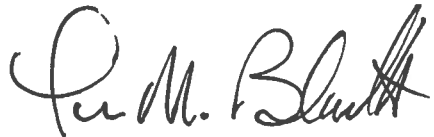
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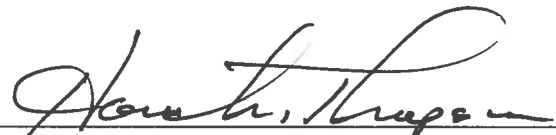
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the people who are so much a part of me that no journey I could ever take is traveled alone. First, my children, two people who for most of their lives have only known a mother to be in school, Clinton Smith and Samantha (Smith) Paulus. I love you more than words can express and am so proud of the young adults you have become. Thank you for being my biggest fans and always cheering me on with your unwavering love, enthusiasm, and confidence in my ability to complete this doctoral program. Because of you, the thought to quit could never fully be entertained in my mind. You two are truly the greatest legacy your Dad and I leave to this planet. Always hunger to learn, spend the energy to seek answers, and remember, if I can do it, you can too!

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ABSTRACT

Classroom incivility is causing major concern, nation-wide, to college administrators, faculty, and students. The damage caused by student incivility has been associated with a decrease in student learning, the deterioration of the classroom learning environment, lower faculty morale, and reduced student retention rates. The purpose of this quantitative non-experimental fixed research design was to explore and compare college faculty and student perceptions of type and frequency of classroom incivilities at a private college in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success. Study results demonstrated that faculty members and students, at the target institution, agreed on the types of uncivil behaviors yet disagreed on the frequency of the behaviors in the classroom. These sets of observations presented two entirely different pictures of the classroom environment. The results of the present study have important implications for creating faculty workshops and opportunities for professional development focused on curbing classroom incivilities and increasing student success.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Classroom student incivility is a serious and growing challenge facing higher education (Boice, 1996; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001; Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009). Classroom incivility has created a great deal of destruction that has impacted the core purpose of higher education. The negative impact associated with uncivil classroom behaviors has been found to contribute to the disruption of the learning process, the deterioration of the classroom learning environment, and the deterioration in the faculty-student relationship (Clark, 2008a). Moreover, incivility has been tied to the disruption of the teaching process, a decrease in faculty morale (Clark & Springer, 2007), and concerns about the personal health and safety of faculty members (Feldmann; Clark & Springer; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Additionally, classroom incivility has been connected to a decrease in retention rates, which ultimately results in harming the college's reputation (Feldmann). Historically, as students have left institutions to escape incivility in the learning environment, the unsatisfied students tended to take with them a less-than-positive perception of their experiences, which led to a tarnished reputation for their former college (Nordstrom, Bartels, & Bucy, 2009). Contributing to the ongoing crisis, researchers have found that incidents of classroom incivility continue to increase in frequency and severity on college campuses nationwide (McKinne & Martin; Feldmann).

Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) defined classroom incivility as "behaviors that distract the instructor or other students, disrupt classroom learning, discourage the instructor from teaching, discourage other students from participating, derail the instructor's goals for the period, etc" (p. 16). The challenge in recognizing and addressing incivility lies in the fact that faculty reported having very different opinions about which specific student behaviors were considered uncivil and disruptive in their classrooms. Some faculty members may allow students to text quietly or sleep at their desks, while other faculty members may view such behaviors as disruptive to the learning environment.

A review of literature revealed that uncivil behaviors were typically categorized by the degree of incivility attached to the specific behaviors. Feldmann (2001) offered the following levels of student incivilities: annoyances, classroom terrorism, intimidation, and violence. The mildest uncivil behaviors, annoyances, included such examples as texting, yawning, or sleeping in class. These behaviors were viewed as minimal disruptions when they were single actions. However, when these behaviors occurred with increasing frequency, they were viewed as increasingly disruptive. Classroom terrorism was the second level of incivility, which is behavior that directly interfered with the teaching and learning process. Examples of this incivility included getting up during class to leave the classroom and then returning, conversing loudly with others, and allowing a cell phone to ring. The third level, intimidation, was identified as when the uncivil student may have threatened to report the faculty member to a dean, or completed a negative student evaluation of the faculty member as a means to pressure the faculty

member into compliance. The fourth level, violence, included the most egregious uncivil behaviors involving a threat of, or actual, assault on the faculty member or classmates.

Researchers indicated that the most violent acts of incivility were rare occurrences in the classroom. Mid-level and mild acts of incivility were reported as occurring more frequently, thus being very problematic in the classroom (Feldmann, 2001; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Feldmann believed that if lower-level uncivil behaviors were not immediately addressed by faculty, the behaviors were likely to continue and escalate in severity. He argued that students would mistakenly believe the faculty member was condoning the behavior, thus enabling students to continue to engage in uncivil behaviors.

Statement of the Problem

Faculty members and students claim that uncivil behaviors negatively impact the learning environment, thus impeding the primary function of higher education. As previously mentioned, the damage caused by student incivility in the classroom has been linked to a decrease of student learning, as well as lower faculty morale and lower retention rates at colleges nationwide. Yet little research has explored both faculty members' and students' experiences with classroom incivility. It was important to determine which specific behaviors both groups perceived to occur most frequently and which were also the most disruptive to the learning process. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) found that faculty members might feel more empowered in addressing student incivility if they were armed with empirical evidence supporting students' frustrations with their uncivil peers. Moreover, uncivil students may be more likely to cease disruptive behaviors when informed that their peers viewed specific behaviors as

inappropriate for the learning environment. The purpose of this study was to identify faculty members' and students' experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success. The strategies created from this study would then be presented to faculty members through professional development workshops and to students through freshmen orientation sessions in order to reduce student incivility in the classroom.

Background

Student incivility in the college classroom has continued to increase in institutions of higher education across the nation (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Although the literature review revealed no empirical studies to establish exactly why or what motivates students to participate in uncivil behaviors, several researchers provided possible theories of explanation. Supporters of Choice Theory, as an explanation of student incivility, argued that students were solely responsible for their incivility because they chose their own behaviors (McKinne & Martin). Glasser (1998) suggested that students were always in control of their own behaviors. They chose to participate in specific behaviors based on five basic needs: belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival. Choice Theory advanced the argument that students overtly choose to be uncivil in order to fulfill a particular need. In other words, a student may have chosen to use his or her laptop computer during class to play games in order to fulfill the need for fun. He or she may have chosen to argue with a professor about a grade in order to fulfill the need for power.

In keeping with the literature that supported incivility as a conscious choice made by students, several researchers posited consumer mentality as an explanation for uncivil

behaviors (Alberts, Hazen, & Theobald, 2010; Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009; Nordstrom et al., 2009). The review of literature revealed that students were no longer enrolling in college to experience a self-fulfilling intellectual experience. Rather, a college degree was viewed as a product purchased through tuition payments that would provide assurance of a high-paying job. Nordstrom et al. referred to this frame of reference as college student consumerism mentality. Students with this *customer is always right* [emphasis added] consumer mentality felt entitled to make specific demands of faculty members regarding assignments and grades. According to Lippman et al., students believed this role of superiority entitled them to engage in uncivil behaviors at will. This theory was supported by others as well. Nordstrom et al. revealed that students were much more likely to engage in uncivil behaviors when they possessed a consumer mentality toward higher education.

Another intriguing predictor of student incivility was the notion of student entitlement (Boice, 1996; Lippmann et al., 2009; Nordstrom et al., 2009). Researchers argued that many students who engaged in student incivility operated from a self-centered disposition referred to as student entitlement. In other words, these students operated from a frame of reference of a general disregard for most authority figures, in this case, faculty members. Their behaviors and attitudes projected a sense of being entitled to a higher grade than their product would warrant. Many times entitled students possessed highly inflated expectations of what their grades should have been and when these expectations were not met, their feelings of entitlement were manifested by disrespectful comments, rude behaviors, and, possibly, threats to the faculty member.

Both Choice Theory and student entitlement posit that students are in control of their behaviors and specifically choose to engage in uncivil classroom behaviors in order to support their individual needs. Other explanations of why students behave uncivilly focused on more external influences that induced students to participate in uncivil behaviors. Seidman (2005) noted that many college students were coming to class under the influence of medications or drugs, and were suffering from fatigue. Seidman noted that these conditions could certainly impact students' behaviors in class. For example, side effects of a particular medication could have caused students to feel drowsy, causing the students to yawn and/or fall asleep in class.

Springboarding from a physiological explanation to a more psychological explanation of student incivility, Nordstrom et al. (2009) found that students with a narcissistic orientation were more likely to participate in uncivil classroom behaviors. Nordstrom et al. characterized a narcissist as someone who was preoccupied with the self, along with exhibiting a gross lack of empathy for the feelings and needs of others. A college student with a narcissistic orientation would likely not care how their uncivil behaviors negatively impacted their professor or classmates. Nordstrom et al. also noted that college students with narcissistic orientations may not reach clinical levels of the disorder of narcissism; however, their demanding, uncivil behaviors and expectations could prove to be extremely problematic to a classroom climate.

Previously conducted research also suggested that faculty members were not free from a degree of onus regarding the increase of student incivility in the classroom. Several researchers emphasized the reciprocal nature of the student-faculty relationship (Alberts et al., 2010; Boice, 1996; Clark, 2008b; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Moreover,

when faculty members behaved toward students in an uncivil manner, such as treating students with contempt, using unfair grading practices, verbally abusing students in class, threatening their grades, and/or inattentive planning, students were more likely to respond back with incivility (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Students who experienced faculty incivility reported feeling “traumatized, powerless, helpless, and angry” (Clark, 2008b, p. 459). Royce (2000) reported that 622 out of 1,284, or 48.4%, of the faculty respondents admitted that they might have contributed to classroom incivility.

Grade inflation was reported as another contributing factor to student classroom incivility (Lippmann et al., 2009). “Grade inflation has important implications for student entitlement, primarily by fostering inflated expectations among students about the quality of their work and about the amount of work expected of students” (p. 199). Therefore, when faculty members offer a challenging course with rigorous expectations, they are likely to be met with student-instructor confrontations. Numerous cases of angry students demanding a higher grade for average work presented a constant strain on the student-instructor relationship.

As the frequency of student incivility continues to increase, there seems to be little empirical evidence explaining why faculty members do not report incidents of student incivility to their administrators. Previously conducted research revealed that many faculty members did not report student incivility, due to fear of both professional and personal repercussions (Lampman et al., 2009). For example, faculty seeking tenure reported feeling more at-risk professionally than already-tenured faculty members. Considering the culture of consumerism within higher education, faculty members were not confident that they would be supported by their administrators when dealing with

uncivil students (Alberts et al., 2010; Clark & Springer, 2007; Seidman, 2005). Faculty members were also concerned with possible negative student evaluations if they were overly strict with classroom rules and expectations. As student evaluations were connected with the tenure process, tenure track faculty members believed they could be viewed as incompetent by administrators, which could result in not receiving tenure status (Clark & Springer; Lampman et al.; Seidman). Clark and Springer reported that even the faculty members who did feel confident in the support they received from their administrators had been hesitant to take official action against uncivil students because of the lengthy time and emotional drain of the student grievance processes.

Researchers also reported that faculty members did not report incidents of student incivility due to concern about their own physical and psychological health. Benton (2007) wrote that “. . . we cannot pursue disciplinary action within a college unless we are willing to accept the possibility of personal retaliation by the student outside the college’s area of jurisdiction, off the campus, or after graduation” (p. D14). Researchers have reported that faculty members have experienced increased levels of stress, loss of sleep, and at times, fear for their personal safety as a result of student incivility (Clark & Springer, 2007; Lampman et al., 2009).

Lack of classroom management training is another reason that faculty members did not report incidents of student incivility. Typically, college professors are considered experts in their content area, yet many have never received professional development in the area of classroom management, which could lead to efficacy issues regarding their ability to handle incidents of incivility successfully (Boice, 1996; Seidman, 2005). In other words, faculty members may not have reported incidents of student incivility

because they simply were not cognizant that officially reporting the incident was an appropriate or acceptable option.

Clearly, student incivility that is not addressed will not spontaneously disappear. On the contrary, researchers have noted that when faculty members did not immediately tackle the minor incidents of incivility, the result was likely to be continued and perhaps escalated acts of incivility in the classroom. “Failure to take action immediately after an act of incivility increases the scope of the action that eventually will have to be taken. First, the longer the incivility continues, the higher the level of response that will be necessary” (Feldmann, 2001, p. 139). Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that other students were also negatively impacted by student incivility. College students expected faculty members to manage the classroom in a way that provided a positive and healthy learning environment (Alberts et al., 2010; Boice, 1996; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; McKinne & Martin, 2010).

Many strategies intended to curb student incivility have emerged from the review of literature. A strategy most often noted in the literature was for the faculty member to be proactive when dealing with uncivil behaviors in their classrooms (Feldmann, 2001; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Seidman, 2005). Researchers believed it was critical for faculty to articulate behavioral expectations of the classroom clearly on the first day of class and to repeat and reinforce the expectations throughout the first week. Additionally, the expectations of appropriate behavior should be presented in course syllabi.

McKinne and Martin (2010) encouraged faculty to collaborate with students on the first day of class to develop classroom definitions and examples of unacceptable or uncivil behaviors. Other researchers also suggested that student involvement in

establishing appropriate classroom norms provided an element of peer influence that might assist the professor in developing a positive learning environment. “For those students who may not care what the instructor thinks of their attitudes/behaviors, they may care what their colleagues think” (Nordstrom et al., 2009, p. 80).

Much has been written about the impact of establishing a positive teacher-student relationship in an effort to reduce student incivility. Seidman (2005) reported that faculty members who had strong and healthy teacher-student relationships experienced considerably fewer discipline problems from students than faculty who did not have positive teacher-student relationships. A positive teacher-student relationship was defined as a relationship where “teachers . . . exhibit strong levels of dominance and cooperation and are aware of high-need students” (p. 44).

According to Goodboy and Myers (2009), faculty members who were able to use immediacy skills with their students were more likely to have a positive teacher-student relationship. Boice (1996) and McKinne and Martin (2010) noted that instructors skilled in immediacy behaviors expressed warmth, friendliness, and approachability through both their verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Direct eye contact, smiling, leaning forward, and vocal expressiveness to communicate a sense of nurturance were also immediacy skills used by professors in the classroom. Goodboy and Myers found that faculty members who were considered, by their students, to use immediacy behaviors while interacting with their students experienced less incivility in the classroom.

Interestingly, Carter and Punyanunt-Carter (2009) sought the most appropriate strategy of treatment of student incivility from the students’ perspective. These researchers explored how faculty treatment of uncivil students was perceived by the civil

students in the classroom. The authors reported that students found that the most acceptable faculty response to student incivility was for the faculty member to talk to the uncivil students in private, after class, and to ask them to refrain from the uncivil behaviors. The least acceptable response was for the faculty member to deduct points from course grades as a result of uncivil behaviors.

In summation, there was no shortage of suggestions for strategies to reduce student incivility in the classroom. However, several researchers noted the shortage of empirical research supporting the effectiveness of specific strategies. This researcher believed that an important precursor to developing successful strategies to reduce student incivilities would be to explore the perceptions of both faculty members' and students' experiences with classroom incivility. Once it could be determined which behaviors both groups defined as uncivil and which behaviors occurred most frequently, those behaviors could be identified and targeted in strategies and initiatives to curb classroom incivility.

Research Questions

To add to the knowledge base of student incivility by identifying faculty and student experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success, the present study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1. What specific behaviors are defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 2. What differences exist in the definitions of uncivil classroom behaviors between faculty and students?

Research Question 3. What is the perceived frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 4. What differences exist between the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between the perceived frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility attached to the behavior as identified by faculty and students?

Description of Terms

Classroom climate. The environment present in a classroom, typically established by the interactions between the faculty and the students (Powell, 2012).

Classroom management. The creation and enforcement of appropriate rules and disciplinary actions that the teacher uses to provide an orderly classroom environment (Powell, 2012).

Classroom terrorism. Students engaging in any uncivil behavior in a manner that overtly and directly interferes with the ability of students to learn and/or faculty to teach in the classroom (Feldmann, 2001).

Consumerism mentality. Students view higher education from a customer mentality. Ultimately, their college degree is a product that they have purchased through tuition dollars. This mentality may be manifested in the classroom as students identifying themselves as the customer rather than the learner and the faculty member as the service provider instead of the instructor. Moreover, as *the customer is always right*, [emphasis added] the students believe they are entitled to behave in ways that they choose themselves (Nordstrom et al., 2009).

Immediacy behaviors. Behaviors from faculty members that express warmth, caring, and interest toward students for example, leaning forward, making eye contact, vocal expressiveness, and smiling (Boice, 1996).

Student entitlement. Students' attitudes and behaviors usually characterized by an obvious disregard for faculty and fellow classmates. Entitled students believe they "deserve what they want because they want it and they want it now" (Lippmann et al., 2009, p. 197).

Student incivility. Any behavior that a student engages in that disrupts the learning or teaching process in the classroom or interferes with the harmonious and cooperative learning environment. Behaviors may be as mild as a loud yawn or as brutal as a physical attack on a classmate or faculty member (Feldmann, 2001; McKinne & Martin, 2010).

Significance of the Study

Incidents of student incivility in the college classroom have increased in frequency across the nation (Clark, 2008a; Lampman et al., 2009; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Researchers have found that the destructive impact of student incivility has wreaked havoc on the many essential areas of student success (e.g., the learning environment, students, faculty, and administrators). Moreover, researchers reported a shortage of empirical research available on this topic (Alberts et al., 2010; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010).

One of the primary concerns with student incivility in the classroom that has garnered the attention of college administrators is the impact on retention. College administrators, particularly vice presidents and deans, have invested tremendous energy and substantial amounts and types of resources toward improving retention rates on their

campuses. Seidman (2005) found that an unsatisfactory learning environment was identified as one of the most common reasons given about why students left college early. Seidman noted that the subpar learning environment was more important in students' decisions to leave college early than were personal or financial reasons. It is axiomatic that when students leave an institution because they are dissatisfied with the quality of the learning environment, the potential damage to the institution's reputation is considerable (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Feldmann, 2001).

Additionally, researchers have found that student incivility has clearly taken a toll on the faculty members. Faculty members have reported loss of morale, deteriorating physical, psychological, and even financial health as a result of student incivility in the classroom (Clark & Springer, 2007). Boice (1996) found that faculty reported less enthusiasm, lower levels of preparedness for class, and lower levels of approachability in their classes that included students who exhibited high levels of incivility.

Regarding the primary stakeholders, when dealing with student incivility, researchers have found that students were clearly upset by classroom incivility and expected faculty members to address the issue (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Seidman (2005) reported that on occasion, in lieu of faculty addressing the uncivil behaviors, the civil students have stepped up to confront their disruptive peers. "What is surprising, however, is that disruptive behavior impacts the students just as much – if not more – than the professors. Many times students are the ones telling their fellow students to be quiet" (p. 44).

Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) noted that concrete guidelines were needed in order to determine which specific uncivil behaviors to target in newly created initiatives and

strategies to reduce incivility. It is clear that faculty can no longer ignore even the mildest acts of student incivility, hoping that these acts will somehow disappear spontaneously. In fact, the opposite has been found to be the case. The behaviors were likely to continue to occur, and also to increase in intensity as well (Alberts et al., 2010; Feldmann, 2001).

The above studies clearly indicated the breadth of disruption that student incivility has caused in higher education. When faculty members were proactive and addressed the mild levels of incivility in the classroom, the behaviors were likely to cease. As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to identify faculty and student experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success. The strategies created from this study would be presented to faculty members through professional development workshops and to students through freshman orientation sessions in order to reduce student incivility in the classroom. The process to accomplish this purpose is presented next.

Process to Accomplish

A convenience sampling procedure was used at a small, private, nonsectarian Midwestern, nonsecular college in order to explore perceptions of student incivility. The college was unique because it included one campus offering associate degrees and another campus offering a variety of baccalaureate degrees. The population for this study was all full-time and part-time faculty and all full-time and part-time undergraduate students at the research sites. Attempting to survey the entire population of both groups was appropriate due to the internal focus of the research. The sample included all full-time and part-time faculty members employed at the college who responded to the

survey, as well as all full-time and part-time undergraduate students enrolled in courses at the college who responded to the survey. Demographic information collected from the faculty respondents included full-time or part-time status, age, race, years of teaching experience at the college, and content discipline. Demographic information collected from the students included full-time or part-time status, age, race, major, and year in college.

For the purposes of this study, higher education administrators were not included as participants; however, they would likely be interested in the results of this study because student success is an important factor in determining an institution's success. Administrative support would be essential in allocating resources to provide professional development opportunities for faculty and students in order to curb student incivility in the classroom.

The methodology used for this research was a descriptive survey. McKinne and Martin (2010) gave permission to adapt two surveys that they designed to measure student and faculty perceptions of classroom incivility. Faculty members completed the survey, *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*, and students completed the survey, *Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*. Each survey included a list of 21 behaviors that were considered uncivil, based on a review of literature (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; Royce, 2000; McKinne and Martin). McKinne and Martin established face validity through pilot testing and then made appropriate revisions based on feedback from a group of faculty and students familiar with student incivility. Additionally, the instrument was analyzed for test-retest reliability, producing a correlation coefficient of 0.721, indicating

stability. The researchers reported that 49.2% of all survey responses were answered similarly in a test-retest reliability measure to indicate consistency.

Research Question 1. What specific behaviors are defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty and students?

To answer the first research question, faculty and students examined a list of 21 uncivil behaviors and indicated if the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert-type response scale. The response options were 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). The mean rating for each behavior as submitted by faculty and students was calculated and then the behaviors were ranked in order of incivility, from most uncivil to least uncivil for each group of respondents.

Research Question 2. What differences exist in definitions of uncivil classroom behaviors between faculty and students?

To answer the second research question, *t*-tests of faculty and student responses to survey questions were computed and analyzed in order to discover if any statistically significant differences existed. Faculty and students examined the list of 21 uncivil behaviors and were asked to indicate if the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert-type response scale. The response options were 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). A *t*-test was computed and analyzed to compare the faculty and student mean responses to each of the 21 behaviors. The researcher compared the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level in order to determine the statistical significance of the differences between faculty and student perceptions of which behaviors were considered most uncivil. Examples of the uncivil behaviors

included acting bored or apathetic, causing disruptions by using cell phones during class, and disapproving groans.

Research Question 3. What is the perceived frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

To answer the third research question, faculty and students were asked to rate the same 21 behaviors with a 6-point Likert-type response scale regarding how frequently they observed each behavior in classrooms. The response options were 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), 6 (5 or more times). The mean rating for the frequency of each behavior observed by faculty and students was calculated. The behaviors were then listed in rank order, from most frequently observed to least frequently observed.

Research Question 4. What differences exist in the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as perceived by faculty members and students?

To answer the fourth research question, faculty and students were asked to rate the same 21 behaviors with a 6-point Likert-type response scale regarding how frequently they observed each behavior in classroom. The response options were 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), 6 (5 or more times). A *t*-test was used to compare the faculty and student responses of each of the 21 behaviors. A comparison was made of the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level in order to determine the statistically significant differences in perceived frequency of each behavior as provided by faculty and student respondent groups.

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between the frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior as identified by faculty and students?

In order to answer the fifth research question, a Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was calculated for each pairing. This analysis was conducted to determine if a correlation existed between the assignment of incivility to a behavior and the frequency of the uncivil behavior observed by faculty members and students. For example, would a particular behavior be considered more uncivil if it were observed frequently?

Both the *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility* and the *Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility* surveys were distributed to the respective groups of respondents through SurveyMonkey, an online survey tool. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) acknowledged both advantages and limitations about using the Internet to collect data. A primary advantage of utilizing online survey methods was the cost-effectiveness of distributing the survey to very large populations. Additionally, all students and faculty possessed college email addresses, which allowed for a direct line of delivery of the survey. Both faculty and student respondents were familiar with the SurveyMonkey tool because several prior surveys had been distributed to both respondent groups via that delivery method. This familiarity provided an advantage to the researcher because the respondents were more comfortable navigating the survey process.

Limitations associated with online survey methods included the possible low response rate. Furthermore, respondents may have been limited to people who were "(a) comfortable with computers, (b) spend a fair amount of time on Internet, (c) enjoy

partaking in research studies, and (d) [were] sufficiently enticed by [the] research topic to participate” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 204).

Another possible limitation of this study was a low response rate from students. In order to secure a higher response rate, a drawing for three \$50 cash prizes was offered for completion of the survey. Additionally, SurveyMonkey provided a feature that allowed the researcher to send two reminders to respondents who had not completed the survey. This follow-up resulted in a slight increase in response rate.

The sample for this study included the faculty and students who responded to the survey. The survey was distributed to faculty through the institution’s faculty group email address. Concurrently, the survey was also sent electronically to all students through the college’s course management system. The timing of the distribution of the survey was an important factor. The researcher determined that the survey should not be distributed until approximately the 10th week of the semester. If the survey had been distributed too early in the semester, the classroom climate would not have had enough time to become established, thus making it difficult to assess the intensity and the frequency of uncivil behaviors accurately.

A cover letter that provided a brief introduction of the researcher, the research topic, and the link to the survey was provided. Upon accessing the survey, respondents were met with another brief introduction of the study and an informed consent agreement. The consent form addressed the voluntary nature of participation, contact information for any questions regarding the research project, the promise of confidentiality, an overview of risks associated with participation, and the benefits of participating in the survey. Respondents knowingly waived the requirement of written consent when they clicked the

“Yes” button, indicating their consent to participate, which then launched participants to the appropriate survey.

There are always some risks involved in participating in online surveys. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) noted the difficulty in determining whether respondents experienced stress as a result of responding to questions on the survey. In order to protect everyone’s interests, contact information for the researcher was provided to respondents in an effort to ensure any desired follow-up for them.

The viability of this study was bolstered by the researcher’s access to both the faculty and student respondent groups at the selected institution. Moreover, as the researcher had been employed by the institution as an academic administrator, the researcher had a history of participating in procedural and policy making opportunities to improve student success and faculty development.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to identify faculty and student experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success. As previously stated, the resulting consequences of the increasing levels of uncivil behaviors in the college classroom across the nation continue to impact higher education negatively. The next chapter will provide an expanded review of research concerning student incivility in the college classroom.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The growing culture of student incivility in the college classroom has caused a significant amount of damage to several key areas of higher education (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; Gilroy, 2008). Classroom incivility was defined by Feldmann as “any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere” (p. 137). Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) expanded on this definition by stating that uncivil behaviors include any behavior that interferes or negatively impacts the classroom community atmosphere. Such behaviors would include “behaviors that distract the instructor or the students, disrupt classroom learning, discourage the instructor from teaching, discourage other students from participating, derail the instructor’s goal for the period, etc.” (p. 16). Braden and Smith (2006) noted that the impact of technology had also led to increased classroom incivility. Initially, the intent of classroom technology was to provide enhanced pedagogical tools for faculty members to engage their students. Consequently, classroom incivility has increased with the addition of technology-enabled disruptions, such as texting, tweeting, and instant messaging (Galagan & Biech, 2010). Clearly, student incivility in the classroom is a serious and growing concern in higher education that can no longer be ignored (Bjorklund & Rehling; Clark, 2008a; McKinne & Martin, 2010).

Student Incivility

The review of literature established that uncivil student behaviors could be grouped into levels based on the degree of incivility attached to the behavior or the degree of intentionality motivating the uncivil act. As mentioned in Chapter I, Feldmann (2001) provided four levels of classroom incivility. The first level, annoyances, included the mildest student disruptions, such as texting, yawning, or sleeping in class. The second level, classroom terrorism, included student behaviors during class, such as conversing with others, allowing a cell phone to ring, and entering the classroom late or exiting the classroom early. Feldmann noted that these types of behaviors directly and overtly interfered with the teaching and learning processes. The third level, intimidation, raised the degree of incivility on the part of the student, including threatening to report the faculty member to the dean or completing a negative faculty evaluation as a form of pressure for a higher grade, extended deadline, or other special treatment. The fourth level of incivility, violence, might involve a student threatening or actually committing a physical assault on classmates or faculty members.

Similarly, DeLucia and Iasenza (1995) classified uncivil classroom behaviors into three levels. The first level, aggressive student behaviors, included student incivility in the range from insensitivity to the feelings of classmates and faculty members all the way up to physically attacking them. The second level, irresponsible behaviors, appeared when students failed to be accountable for their own learning. This type of behavior may surface in the form of not being prepared for class, dominating the class discussion, or choosing not to engage or participate in the learning process. The third level, inappropriate student behaviors, were those behaviors that eroded a productive learning

environment, such as texting, talking to others, and eating in class. DeLucia and Iasenza reported that at first glance, these third-level inappropriate behaviors were considered the least disruptive; yet, the cumulative effect of these inappropriate behaviors could have an extremely negative impact on the civil students as well as the faculty member.

Meyers (2003) presented yet another grouping of uncivil behaviors. Meyers classified uncivil behaviors as either overt or covert. Disruptive behaviors that were blatantly obvious, such as talking during class, eating or drinking loudly, or using a cell phone, were considered overt behaviors. The more passive and less obvious disruptions, such as sleeping in class, acting bored, arriving late or leaving class early were considered covert incivilities.

The review of literature revealed only slight differences in the classifications of uncivil behaviors; however, the researchers concurred that the most egregious behaviors such as physical violence were rare occurrences in the classrooms (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Boice, 1996; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Conversely, the most mild classroom incivilities occurred at an extremely high degree of frequency, thereby causing significant disruption to the learning process, and jeopardizing the well-being of the college community (Bjorklund & Rehling; Clark & Springer, 2010; Feldmann, 2001).

Researchers noted that classrooms plagued with a high degree of incivility tended to compromise the learning environment by developing an atmosphere founded on hostility, anger, and the lack of mutual respect (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; Frey, 2009; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). Such an environment is not supportive of the teaching or learning processes. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) added that uncivil student behavior short-changes the serious college students and derails faculty members' attempts to

achieve the learning goals of the session. Cundell and Pierce (2009) stated that in order for college students to achieve academic excellence, the classroom environment needed to be one that supported student involvement and interaction. In fact, according to Cundell and Pierce, it was important that students felt comfortable enough to participate and interact with their fellow classmates and instructor without fear of retaliation from uncivil students. Thus, an uncivil classroom environment produced a significant barrier to students trying to reach their educational goals.

Another important concern with classroom incivility was the negative impact it had on the faculty-student relationship. Ullah and Wilson (2007) examined the relationship between academic achievement and students' relationships with faculty members by analyzing data collected over a three-year period via the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The researchers reported that students' positive relationships with faculty members had a positive effect on their overall academic achievement. According to Carbone (1999), it has become increasingly apparent that students want and expect faculty members to address incivility in the classroom. Moreover, several researchers reported that if faculty members ignored or did not address the uncivil behaviors, the civil students lost respect for them, thus harming the student-faculty relationship (Clark & Springer, 2010; Kuhlenschmidt, 1999; Young, 2003). Clearly, an important variable in a healthy teacher-student relationship lies with the ability of the faculty member to foster and maintain a civil classroom environment (Clark & Springer, 2007).

The increase in student incivility has also caused serious problems for faculty members. Researchers agreed that most, if not all, college faculty will experience student

incivility during their career (Alberts et al., 2010; Boice, 1996; Clark & Springer, 2007; Morrissette, 2001). Repercussions of student incivility have reportedly jeopardized the physical and psychological welfare of the entire campus community (Clark & Springer, 2010; Morrissette). Specifically, faculty members reported a decrease in morale as a result of the increased levels of classroom incivility. Morrissette lamented that when faculty members dreaded facing uncivil students in class, they felt compelled to spend the majority of their energy creating strategies to cope with disruptive students rather than preparing for class. Eventually, the faculty members felt drained, demoralized, and disillusioned, leading to a level of dissatisfaction with their ability to teach properly.

College faculty members also reported the negative physical impact they experienced in the aftermath of student incivility. “As a consequence of uncivil encounters with students, faculty members reported losing sleep and experiencing interrupted sleep patterns. Many harbored feelings of self-doubt about their teaching abilities and assumed much of the blame for what had occurred” (Clark & Springer, 2007, p. 8). Additionally, faculty members reported feeling depressed and physically fatigued as a result of incivility in the classroom.

Faculty members also reported concerns about their personal safety as a result of student incivility in the classroom (Benton, 2007). Benton cited examples such as the 2007 Virginia Tech shootings to illustrate the possibility of uncivil students resorting to deadly violence. Feldmann (2001) also stressed the importance of addressing acts of incivility in terms of personal protection. Faculty members should be cognizant of the potential for physical violence as a result of escalating uncivil behaviors. He noted that faculty members who were able to escape retaliation from uncivil students should also

consider the safety of these students' next instructors by documenting and reporting uncivil student incidents.

College administrators were also impacted by the increasing rate of classroom incivility. Retaining students through graduation is a major concern of college administrators. "Classroom incivilities may affect the academic and intellectual development of students negatively and reduce their commitment to their college or university, both of which can impede a student's progress toward his or her educational goals" (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004, p. 68). Polinsky (2003) corroborated this concern by reporting that, along with financial concerns and personal reasons, college students cited a poor learning environment as one of the primary reasons for leaving a college. As a result, providing an effective and healthy learning environment was a critical factor in retaining college students through graduation.

Contributing to the complexity of student incivility in the classroom is a disagreement among faculty members concerning which specific behaviors are considered disruptive to the learning and teaching process (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Swinney, Elder, & Seaton, 2010). In other words, some faculty members may view texting during class as highly disrespectful and uncivil. Other faculty members may view texting and other examples of virtual incivility as a mild annoyance and a relatively harmless classroom behavior. Moreover, some faculty members permitted students to eat, drink, and sleep in their classrooms while other faculty members viewed these behaviors as highly uncivil. The differing opinions about exactly which behaviors were deemed uncivil created a significant challenge in developing strategies to curb classroom incivility.

Faculty Incivility

It would be ineffective to consider strategies to reduce student incivility without examining faculty members' contributions to an uncivil classroom climate. Admittedly beyond the scope of this study, faculty-instigated incivility cannot be ignored. The review of literature revealed that incivility in the classroom was not entirely committed by college students; faculty members were also guilty of disruptive classroom behaviors (Boice, 1996; Clark, 2008b; Feldmann, 2001; Gilroy, 2008; Marchiondo, Marchiondo & Lasiter, 2010). These researchers considered classroom incivility reciprocal in nature, a product of both the faculty members and the students. "Classroom incivility is an interactive and dynamic process where both parties share responsibility" (Clark, p. 284). In other words, both students and faculty members shared in the responsibility for the disruptive classroom atmosphere. Naturally, faculty-instigated incivility does not excuse student-instigated incivility; however, it may be beneficial for faculty members to recognize that they may be part of both the problem and its solution. It is possible that faculty members retaliate with uncivil behaviors as a response to student incivility (Marchiondo et al.). Additionally, Gilroy asserted that some students engaged in uncivil behavior as a response to perceived or real uncivil treatment from faculty members. Gilroy emphasized that both faculty members and students should take responsibility for the civil classroom environment by thinking carefully before reacting to a challenging classroom situation.

McKinne and Martin (2010) explored the perceptions of college students and faculty from three midwestern states about classroom incivility. The research sample included 197 undergraduate students who completed the *Student Perceptions of*

Classroom Incivility survey and 52 faculty members who completed the *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility* survey. Several student respondents indicated that they had experienced faculty incivility and that a professor's uncivil behavior seemed to ignite and promote student uncivil behaviors. McKinne and Martin reported that

Over and over, students spoke to the perceived lack of respect in the classroom. Comments ranged from "Sometimes the teacher responds in a way befitting an eight year old and that is disrespectful and insulting." It causes the students to backlash and in turn, treat the teacher like they're "dumber" – or – "The teacher needs to respect the student to earn respect in return" and "The teacher must show the same courtesy and respect for the students as they expect from students." (p. 12)

Typical uncivil behaviors assigned to faculty members included acting uncaring, arriving late for class, and making sarcastic remarks. Additional incivility attributed to faculty members included faculty members treating students unfairly, expecting them to conform to rigid requirements, demeaning and belittling students, and practicing discriminating behaviors (Clark & Springer, 2010; Marchiondo et al., 2010). As a result of faculty incivility, students reported feeling traumatized, helpless, powerless, and angry (Clark, 2008a). McKinne and Martin (2010) noted that negative faculty behaviors, such as refusing to answer students' questions and openly treating students with contempt, could create a classroom environment that encouraged students to respond with incivility.

Provitera McGlynn (1999) postulated that college professors may be unaware that their behaviors created an atmosphere conducive to the development of an uncivil culture. Provitera McGlynn suggested that when faculty members participated in uncivil

behaviors or failed to address student incivility, they were unintentionally sending a message to their students that such behavior was acceptable in their classroom. In other words, if faculty members answered cell phones while teaching class, naturally, their students would assume that cell phone use was an acceptable classroom behavior.

Causes of Student Incivility

Because classrooms in higher education are experiencing a substantial increase of incivility, it was surprising to discover the void in empirical research focusing on the causes of classroom incivility. However, the extant research demonstrated a myriad of possible theories offering plausible explanations for the increase in student incivility. Several researchers provided theoretical explanations that centered on the physical environment of the classroom, societal norms embraced by specific generations, increasing levels of cultural diversity in the classroom, college students' sense of consumerism mentality, and a misguided sense of entitlement (Alberts et al., 2010; Burns & Lohenry, 2010; Carbone, 1999; Gilroy, 2008; Murphy, 2010; Provitiera McGlynn, 1999; Seidman, 2005; Tom, 1998; Weeks, 2011).

Some analyses have revealed that the physical environment, e.g., a large classroom, was a factor in facilitating student disruptive behaviors. Alberts et al. (2010) defined a large lecture hall as one with more than 50 students. Large lecture halls with over 50 students in attendance provided settings in which students felt a higher degree of anonymity, or a sense of deindividuation, leading them to behave more uncivilly. According to Meyers (2008), deindividuation is defined as a state that commonly occurred among large groups. People tended to lose their sense of self-awareness and evaluation apprehension that is more present in smaller group settings (Meyers; Provitiera

McGlynn, 1999). In such cases, people were more likely to participate in disruptive behaviors because they were not concerned with being identified or personally attached to the uncivil behavior. According to Seidman (2005) and Swinney et al. (2010), it was apparent that the physical environment of a classroom and class size had a significant impact on the level of classroom incivility.

Carbone (1999) noted that faculty members teaching in large classrooms were more likely to report “poor attendance, louder packing up of books, more cheating on exams, and more off-task behavior during discussions and group activities” (p. 35). Carbone also concluded that large classrooms provided opportunities for a collection of unique incivilities such as watching portable televisions, passionate making out in the back rows, and having a pizza delivered in class. Alberts et al. (2010) supported this line of thinking in a study of pre-tenured, geography faculty members at United States colleges and universities. Alberts et al. indicated that 68 out of 241 faculty members, or 28.2%, reported experiencing significant inconvenience due to incivility in large lecture halls. Only 21 out of 348 faculty members, or 6%, reported the same level of incivility in small lecture halls. It would appear that in larger classrooms, students tended to lose their sense of self and felt more disconnected with the professor.

The review of literature also suggested that the increase in student incivility in the classroom was tied to generational characteristics of the current college student cohort. This generation has been referred to by such labels as Millennials, Gen-Xers, Generation Y, and Generation Next (Gilroy, 2008; Murphy, 2010; Weeks, 2011). Murphy described Millennial college students as people born between 1977 and 1998. Murphy characterized this cohort as realistic, self-inventive, and extremely nurtured. Furthermore, the cohort

possessed a heavy reliance on technology, preferred to multitask, and tended to rewrite rules. The combination of these characteristics created a more challenging learning environment because the Millennials were intellectually disengaged and yet demanded instant gratification, according to Taylor (2005). The culminating effect of a group of students who were creative and nurtured, and who also demanded instant gratification resulted in an increase of disruptive behaviors in the classroom, requiring faculty members to spend more time creating new classroom management strategies rather than preparing to teach.

Regardless of the label used, it was apparent that the characteristics of the current generation of college students tended to contribute directly to an increase in uncivil behaviors in the classroom. Provitera McGlynn (1999) noted that the current generation expected to be entertained, to be less prepared for college, and to study less. Moreover, college students no longer held professors in the high esteem that professors enjoyed in the past. In fact, students often viewed themselves as equal in status to their professors (McKinne, 2008). McKinne also noted the difficulty that current college students seemed to experience with the concept of authority. Specifically, he noted the general mistrust students had in rules made by adults. Thus, students felt empowered to question faculty members regarding both assignments and grades for the courses. Additionally, McKinne noted that college students who graduated from public high schools tended to bring with them a high school mentality, which reinforced many of the immature and disruptive classroom behaviors.

College classrooms are much more diverse than a decade ago, resulting in a more diverse mixture of student expectations in the classroom than in the past. Diversity

appears in ethnicity, race, age, and the social class of the student body (Provitera McGlynn, 1999). Granted, advantages of a highly diverse classroom included a rich learning environment that provided enhanced discussions founded on unique cultural insights. However, the increased level of diversity in the classroom also presented unique civility challenges (Weeks, 2011). For example, some Asian students may consider classroom participation disrespectful to the professor; therefore they could appear to be unresponsive and nonparticipative in class. In addition, adult students typically bring a higher level of seriousness to the class and may grow impatient with the immature behaviors of the traditional students. It follows then that it is important for college students and faculty members to learn to embrace and respect diversity while consciously expressing civility in and out of the classroom.

Springboarding from explanations of student incivility centered on generational and cultural characteristics, several researchers maintained that perceptions of student entitlement were at the root of increasing incivility in the classroom (Ciani, Summers & Easter, 2008; Lippmann et al., 2009; Nordstrom et al., 2009; Provitera McGlynn, 1999). These researchers suggested that uncivil students tended to possess a misguided sense of entitlement. The entitled students' expectations included the notion that professors should be available to the entitled students 24 hours a day and be ready and willing to make any adjustments to grades, assignments, and classroom policies that the students deemed appropriate, and to have all issues resolved rapidly. In other words, entitled students held unrealistic expectations that they somehow deserved a level of obedience and favorable treatment from both faculty members and their peers. Bartlett (2004) expanded on this concept by noting that entitled students often blamed their professors for their (the

students') own lack of success in class. Lippmann et al. maintained that student entitlement may be exhibited in behaviors such as rudeness or unreasonable requests, such as expecting a response from an email before an early morning class that was sent to a faculty member at midnight. "We and other instructors increasingly see evidence of this sense of entitlement among our students, a sense that they deserve what they want because they want it, and want it now" (p. 197). Ciani et al. (2008) corroborated the notion that increased levels of student entitlement in the classroom were positively correlated with increased levels of student incivility. They reported that student entitlement behaviors that surfaced in the classroom included anger over subpar grades, arguing over assignments, or expecting to devote a minimal amount of effort to the tasks at hand while still earning a high grade.

Lippmann et al. (2009) claimed that student entitlement was a deeply internalized orientation that has been reinforced by a consumerism paradigm shift in the institutional culture of higher education. Interestingly, both college students and college administrators have seemingly subscribed to a consumerism mentality that views the students as customers of the universities. Lippmann et al. noted that, historically, students entered college highly motivated to seek greater knowledge and expertise from their esteemed professors. College students were willing to devote the necessary countless hours to achieve their academic goals and educational pursuits.

According to Levine and Cureton (1998), the days of college classrooms filled with students hungry for knowledge as an intrinsic reward were in the past; college students no longer sought a degree for the reward of a well-rounded education. Moreover, Levine and Cureton lamented that students perceived themselves as customers rather than

learners and faculty members as employees rather than teachers, a notion that resulted in a significant and disruptive shift in the classroom climate. “So some students show up for class whenever they feel like it, or send e-mail messages to professors flatly stating that they missed class because they were hung over” (Young, 2003, p. 29). Moreover, Delucchi and Korgen (2002) reported that 82 out of 195 sociology undergraduate students surveyed, or 42%, believed that their tuition payment entitled them to a college degree. Several researchers asserted that a strong predictor of classroom incivility was college students’ consumerism orientation toward their college education. Consumerism mentality tended to form students’ expectations of the classroom, course, and curriculum experience as an economic exchange rather than pursuit of higher knowledge (Alberts et al., 2010; Gilroy, 2008; Lippmann et al., 2009; Nordstrom et al., 2009; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Provitera McGlynn (1999) reaffirmed the notion that students expressed consumer attitudes by insisting that they were paying the tuition and therefore entitled to run the classroom. Further, the students believed the professors should give them both the information and high grades that their tuition dollars purchased. In addition, the students expected the professor to allow the students to make up missed assignments and provide them with any missed course content.

Nordstrom et al. (2009) corroborated the connection between students’ consumerism mentality and the increase of classroom incivility. In a study attempting to explore predictors of student incivilities, the researchers surveyed 593 undergraduate students from a large, Midwestern university. The results indicated that students who reflected a consumerism mentality toward higher education were much more likely to engage in classroom incivility.

Although researchers conceded that student consumerism was positively tied to classroom incivility, they also noted that the culture of the institutions tended to support the student consumer culture as well. It is no secret that colleges face an increasingly competitive market shadowed by increasing tuition rates and decreasing federal and state financial aid opportunities. In response to the aggressive market, colleges are attempting to attract students and their tuition dollars by catering to student indulgences such as more appealing food selections, state-of-the-art fitness centers, better living arrangements, and student centers that parallel shopping malls and resorts (Lippmann et al., 2009). Interestingly, even some researchers embraced the consumer mentality. In their more recent study, Mehta, Newbold, and O'Rourke (2011) openly referred to college students as customers, the primary targets of collegiate marketing campaigns. As college students continued to internalize the consumer role, they tended to take with them to the classroom the expectation that professors were providing a service and the course grade was ultimately a part of the consumer exchange. These findings have important implications for the broader domain of student incivility.

The increasing levels of student entitlement and student consumerism are important concerns because they provide the foundation for increasing levels of grade inflation. Consumer-oriented students often participate in "grade grubbing," which is defined by Delucchi and Smith (1997) as a situation when students expect high grades for little effort. Lippmann et al. (2009) noted the obvious devaluation of grades with respect to the negative correlation with increasing GPAs and decreasing SAT scores. Grade inflation had key repercussions regarding student incivility. Clearly, students felt entitled to good grades regardless of whether or not they met the set standards of the courses.

Thus, students were likely to confront professors about their grades, demanding higher outcomes for their efforts and expressing anger toward the professor if he or she refused to be accommodating.

As previously mentioned, the review of literature provided few empirical studies to explain why students participated in disruptive and uncivil classroom behaviors. However, McKinne and Martin (2010) were supporters of Choice Theory, developed by Glasser (1998), which emphasized that students were intentional and solely responsible for their uncivil behaviors. Glasser posited that individuals chose their behaviors in an effort to satisfy certain biological needs. Furthermore, according to Choice Theory, biological needs manifest themselves into five basic needs: belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival. Accordingly, supporters of Choice Theory would suggest that a student who is talking to or texting another student during class might be attempting to satisfy their need for fun. Moreover, a student arguing with a professor over a grade may be attempting to satisfy their need for power or survival. Hence, McKinne and Martin argued that student incivility could be a conscious and proactive choice made in the classroom rather than a consequence of the physical environment, specific generational characteristics, or a consumerism mentality.

Seidman (2005) and Kuhlenschmidt and Layne (1999) challenged the view that student incivility was solely driven by the intentional choices of the students in order to satisfy basic needs. These researchers contended that physiological explanations were at the root of classroom incivility. The high prevalence of college students ingesting illegal and legal substances could be the foundation for extreme behaviors in the classroom. Additionally, students who were under the influence of drugs may have less tolerance for

their peers' behaviors and thus react with inappropriate responses. Illness and fatigue were other common physical conditions identified that may factor into incivility. Finally, these authors identified emotional issues, such as a recent loss, redirected aggression, and immaturity, that could result in disruptive classroom behaviors.

College students reported experiencing a variety of mental illnesses, ranging from mild depression to schizophrenia (Kuhlenschmidt & Layne, 1999; Seidman, 2005). A review of the research conducted by Nordstrom et al. (2009) revealed that students with narcissistic tendencies were likely to participate in uncivil classroom behaviors. Students with narcissistic tendencies reportedly expected favorable treatment and lacked empathy for the feelings and needs of others. Therefore, students with narcissistic orientations were oblivious to any negative consequences that their uncivil behaviors caused their fellow classmates and faculty members.

Reporting Student Incivility

Classroom incivility is extremely detrimental to all college stakeholders; therefore, it is important to explore the reasons why college faculty members are reluctant to report incidences of uncivil behaviors. Several researchers noted that faculty members generally refrained from discussing problems of classroom incivility with colleagues or supervisors due to fear of personal and professional ramifications (Boice, 1996; Carbone, 1999; Feldmann, 2001, McKinne & Martin, 2010; Morrissette, 2001; Swinney et al., 2010; Young, 2003). Reportedly, faculty members were not confident that their administrators would support them. College professors were also concerned that they would be viewed as incapable of managing their classrooms and thus be viewed as ineffective. Furthermore, explanations for faculty members' failure to report student

incivility centered on fear of professional repercussions. Alberts et al. (2010) and Clark & Springer (2007) discovered that faculty members were concerned with possible negative faculty evaluations from students as a result of cracking down on uncivil students.

Considering that student evaluations are typically an important component of the tenure process, tenure track faculty members believed that they may not have been granted tenure if they received negative student classroom evaluations. Additionally, professors refrained from reporting incidents of student incivility to avoid the lengthy time and emotional exhaustion that typically accompanied official student grievance processes.

According to Murphy (2010), some instructors attempted to rationalize incivility as an emerging behavioral norm; they believed that no positive outcome would occur by reporting the students. Furthermore, faculty members were hesitant to report disruptive behaviors because of fear of enduring retaliation from the uncivil students. Some faculty members failed to report incidents of incivility out of a sense of concern for the offending student.

Classroom management self-efficacy issues also surfaced as a reason that faculty members did not report student incivility. College professors, while considered experts in their content areas, generally did not receive formal classroom management training that would prepare them to deal with everyday classroom concerns (Anderson, 1999; Boice, 1996; Galagan & Biech, 2010; Seidman, 2005). These researchers maintained that the lack of training could produce low levels of self-efficacy when attempting to deal with classroom incivility effectively. Murphy (2010) lamented that faculty simply did not know how to deal with classroom incivility; they were unsure as to what tactics would work and what tactics would fail. As a result, many faculty members chose not to report

or to address student incivility in the hope that the incivility would spontaneously disappear. Unfortunately, the opposite appeared to be true. Feldmann (2001) reported that when faculty members ignored the disruptive behaviors and did not immediately address the minor acts of incivility, the uncivil behaviors were more likely to escalate in intensity rather than disappear. Provitera McGlynn (1999) proposed that when faculty members ignored uncivil behaviors in the classroom, they were inadvertently sending the message that they permitted and condoned incivilities. Thus, some faculty members were unknowingly encouraging disruptive behaviors by not addressing them.

Additionally, researchers found that many college students were extremely dissatisfied with the increasing levels of classroom incivility and they expected faculty members to address and handle the uncivil students (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Carbone, 1999; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Seidman, 2005). “Not only is student learning significantly inhibited by disruptive behavior, it has become apparent that the so-called ‘good-students’ demand that something be done about it” (Seidman, p. 44). The researchers discovered that students voiced their appreciation and respect for the faculty members who addressed student incivility in the classroom evaluations.

Some colleges are capitalizing on the fact that students are just as upset by classroom incivilities as their faculty members by eliciting help from students to curb the inappropriate behaviors. Because colleges are relying on the aid of students to curb uncivil behavior, faculty members must also be aware of a variety of strategies and techniques that reduce classroom incivilities, and be willing and able to implement them appropriately.

Strategies to Reduce Classroom Incivility

Most, if not all, college faculty members have experienced incivility in the classroom at some point in their career (Alberts et al., 2010; Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001). If faculty members do not address incivility properly, they expose themselves and their classrooms to a variety of negative consequences. Namely, more students may begin to disrupt the class, students may question the competence of the instructor, and the good students may determine the class is a waste of time and thus begin to disengage (Braden & Smith, 2006). Although empirical research was sparse regarding effective strategies to curb student incivility, a review and synthesis of the extant literature revealed abundant theories and suggestions for faculty to utilize in order to counter student classroom incivility and its effects. Most strategies employed a proactive stance while a few provided practical suggestions that would be considered reactive strategies because they were designed to address acts of incivility post-impact or after the uncivil behavior occurred. The proactive theories centered on establishing healthy teacher-student rapport, clearly communicating classroom behavioral norms, modeling civil behavior from the top down, and institutions providing for professional development focused on classroom management at faculty seminars and workshops. Reactive strategies were strategies for faculty to use in addressing uncivil behaviors after the behavior had occurred in the classroom, e.g., private conferencing with the offending student, admonishing the uncivil student in front of the class, or deducting points from the uncivil student's grade.

Several researchers reported that faculty members who are skilled at immediacy behaviors reported fewer incidents of classroom incivility because they were able to create and maintain high quality teacher-student relationships (Boice, 1996; Feldmann,

2001; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Price, 2010). Boice defined immediacy as the extent to which the faculty member expressed warmth, friendliness, and approachability with their verbal and nonverbal behaviors. Immediacy behaviors include forward leans, head nodding, direct eye contact, smiling, and using a pleasant tone of voice. Marzano and Marzano (2003) corroborated the importance of immediacy behaviors in establishing a high quality teacher-student relationship by recommending additional positive classroom behaviors, such as intentionally moving toward and standing by each student during the class period. Moreover, faculty members should credit students with the ownership of ideas and insightful comments. Marzano and Marzano noted the importance of providing the appropriate wait time to allow all students an opportunity to respond to questions. Marzano and Marzano discovered that teachers who used immediacy skills to develop high quality relationships with their students reported 31% fewer disruptive behaviors than teachers who did not have high-quality relationships with their students.

This line of thinking was corroborated by Goodboy and Myers (2009) in a study of 403 college students enrolled in an introductory communications course. Goodboy and Myers revealed that student incivility was negatively correlated with student-perceived instructor immediacy skills. In other words, students who believed their professors were warm, friendly, and engaging were much less likely to participate in disruptive behaviors. Students reported more affinity for *immediate instructors* [emphasis added] and consequently were less likely to challenge them in the classroom. Behaviors as simple as faculty members greeting students before class have been positively correlated with creating a positive learning environment (Weinstein, Laverghetta, Alexander, & Stewart, 2009). These findings have important implications because faculty members can learn

and practice specific immediacy behaviors in order to improve the learning environment in their classrooms. Weinstein et al. emphasized that competent faculty members will continue to develop and practice their repertoire of immediacy skills in order to ensure high-quality teacher-student relationships.

Rudebock (2009) stressed the notion that faculty members need to be cognizant of the humanity of our students. Rudebock encouraged faculty members to be empathetic and caring while maintaining academic standards. Furthermore, Rudebock emphasized the importance of being nonjudgmental and accepting of student differences. Price (2010) agreed with the importance of positive student-teacher relationships as she cautioned faculty members that, “Every interaction we have with students produces either closeness or distance” (p. 7). Price stressed that the more non-immediate or distance-producing behaviors faculty participated in, the more noncompliance and uncivil student behaviors faculty members could expect in return.

Conversely, Alexander-Snow (2004) refuted the claim that some faculty members can effectively combat classroom incivility by sharpening their immediacy skills. Alexander-Snow noted that educational credentials were not always a significant determinant in establishing a positive and healthy classroom atmosphere. Alexander-Snow claimed that personal characteristics of both the professor and students such as race, age, and gender were also an important part of the classroom atmosphere. Alexander-Snow maintained that female faculty members and faculty of color were more likely to experience higher levels of incivility than their white, male counterparts. Alexander-Snow stated that the cultural baggage, including stereotypical belief patterns that students brought to the classroom impacted the level of incivility in the classroom

significantly. DeSouza and Fansler (2003) seemed to support this line of reasoning by suggesting that college students may openly question the authority of faculty members who were viewed by students as possessing a lower social status due to their socio-cultural identity.

Lampman et al. (2009) posited that the level of classroom incivility was related to the attitudes and personalities of the students in the classroom; however, these researchers challenged the notion that the socio-cultural characteristics of the faculty members had a significant impact on the level of classroom incivility. Lampman et al. surveyed 399 professors at an Alaska public university about their experience with disruptive classroom behaviors. These researchers concluded that the frequency of incivility in the classroom was only minimally explained by faculty members' socio-cultural characteristics. Lampman et al. found that factors such as faculty personalities and differences in teaching styles were stronger predictors of student incivility than socio-cultural factors.

Several researchers noted that regardless of the socio-cultural characteristics of the faculty members, classroom behavioral standards need to be clearly established and consistently communicated to students during the first few weeks of class (Clark & Springer, 2007; Morrissette, 2001; Nordstrom et al., 2009). Further, Bruhn (2008) and Tom (1998) advocated the importance of professors discussing examples of proper classroom etiquette and uncivil behaviors on the first day of class and throughout the term of the course. Additionally, Tom believed that teaching appropriate etiquette to students was an invaluable component of the educational process, serving the students well as they progressed onward to their professional lives.

A more concrete strategy included using the syllabus to indicate behavioral expectations. Considering many college students viewed the course syllabus as a contract, several researchers suggested including civility statements, along with specific classroom expectations about appropriate behavior, in the course syllabus (Gilroy, 2008; Morrisette, 2001; Nordstrom et al., 2009; Provitera McGlynn, 1999; Swinney et al., 2010). Murphy (2010) expanded on this strategy by encouraging faculty members to provide students with both a paper copy and an online version of the syllabus. Murphy noted that the civility statement should be very clear about professors' expectations regarding late assignments, absences, tardiness, consequences for plagiarism, policies regarding children in the classroom, and consequences for policy violations. Murphy also suggested quizzing students over the content of the syllabus to be sure students understood classroom expectations. Clark and Springer (2010) and Gilroy recommended including student input in determining classroom expectations. By allowing students to participate in identifying uncivil behaviors, they felt a degree of ownership in the policies and would be more likely to comply. Ultimately, according to Wilkins, Caldarella, Crook-Lyon, and Young (2010), faculty members should ensure that students are informed and understand which behaviors professors considered acceptable and which behaviors were unacceptable and disruptive to the learning environment.

Whereas clearly communicating behavioral expectations was a powerful strategy to eliminate classroom incivility, the consensus among several researchers was that college professors' behaviors strongly impacted the learning environment. Therefore, modeling civility from the top down was also believed to be a critical component of effective strategies to reduce student incivility (Anthony & Yastik, 2011; Burns &

Lohenry, 2010; Boice, 1996; Carbone, 1999; Clark & Springer, 2010; Gilroy, 2008; Provitera McGlynn, 1999; Swinney et al., 2010). If faculty members' uncivil behaviors invited student incivility, then axiomatically, faculty members modeling civil behavior should encourage student civility. Burns (2003) stressed the notion that practicing civility and demonstrating respect was an important obligation assigned to people who guide and teach students. Gilroy advocated top-down modeling for appropriate and civil behaviors. He claimed that modeling should begin with the members of the board of trustees and administrators and then work its way down to faculty and staff members. Primarily, college professors should behave in a way that creates a classroom culture of mutual respect by refraining from participating in uncivil behaviors they aspire to eliminate, such as arriving to class late, using cell phones in class, and being disrespectful to students. Nordstrom et al. (2009) called for faculty members to "demonstrate inclusiveness and respect, projecting a professional image and refraining from sarcastic or demeaning comments" (p. 83).

Typically, the majority of formal training for college faculty members centered on research (Frey, 2009). Complicating any attempt to curb classroom incivility is the fact that most professors have had limited, if any, formal classroom management training (Seidman, 2005). Opportunities for workshops and in-service training sessions dedicated to classroom management techniques would allow faculty members to create a repertoire of strategies to use in order to curb student incivility (Alberts et al., 2010; McKinne & Martin, 2010). For example, Gilroy (2008) described an effective workshop that served as the annual civility event. The student drama club participated in the workshop by providing improvisational theatre skits featuring examples of commonly reported student

incivility. According to Gilroy, participants appreciated the opportunity to have an open dialogue with their colleagues about best and worst practices in dealing with disruptive behaviors.

The above-suggested strategies centered on proactive measures for faculty members to utilize as they attempted to curb classroom incivility. It is equally important to include tactics for faculty members to use after the uncivil behaviors occur. College faculty members need to be cognizant of the impact their method of addressing student incivility may have on the classroom learning environment. Gilroy (2008) lamented, “Countering uncivil behavior with equally uncivil behavior is inflammatory and will have very predictive negative consequences” (p. 40). Kilmer (1998) and Murphy (2010) insisted that faculty members should refrain from addressing uncivil students in front of classmates, because embarrassing an offending student typically led to escalating both the uncivil behaviors and the necessary responses from the faculty member. Both Kilmer and Murphy recommended that faculty members quickly arrange a private conversation with the student in order to address the uncivil behavior incident. The faculty member should then clearly identify the uncivil behavior and ask the student to refrain from participating in disruptive behaviors in the future.

According to Carter and Punyanunt-Carter (2009), students also agreed with these types of private one-on-one consultations. In their study of 402 college students, inquiring about student perceptions of the correct way for faculty members to address disruptive students, respondents reported that the most acceptable method of confronting incivility was for the instructor to wait until after class to address the student privately. The second most acceptable response included the instructor reminding the entire class

that the particular observed behavior was unacceptable and that students should leave the classroom if they were unable to refrain from the offending uncivil behavior. Basically, it appeared to be important to students that faculty members allow an offending student to save face on their first violation.

Murphy (2010) also suggested that faculty members attempt to build and maintain a positive faculty-student relationship with the offending student by focusing on a change in behavior rather than on the specific disruptive behavior. In other words, the faculty member could suggest an alternative behavior to replace the uncivil behavior in the future. In doing so, the student may feel less threatened and more open to establishing positive rapport with the instructor. Ullah & Wilson (2007) determined that a positive relationship with faculty members correlated positively with student success. Ullah and Wilson encouraged faculty members to use any interaction with students as an opportunity to develop a healthy relationship and thus improve the learning environment.

With the crisis of increasing student incivility in the classroom, it is important to note that the majority of empirical research has focused on students' perceptions of classroom incivility. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) discovered that students were aware of disruptive behaviors in the classroom and found that the uncivil behaviors interfered with the learning environment. Student respondents identified text messaging, packing up books before class was over, yawning, and eating and drinking as their most frequently observed uncivil behaviors. The student respondents identified continuing to talk after being asked to stop, coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs, allowing a cell phone to ring, and conversing loudly with others as the most uncivil behaviors. Young (2003) reported similar findings, as students noted their frustration with their

peers' uncivil behaviors such as "loud gum chewing, pen and pencil tapping, packing up while professor is still speaking, body odor, skimpily clad individuals, and off-topic discussions" (p. A29). Bjorklund and Rehling concluded that students and faculty members shared similar perceptions of the negative impact of incivility in the classroom. Further, these authors encouraged administrators and faculty members to develop strategies to target the specific behaviors identified by the students as uncivil while administrators and faculty members attempted to eliminate classroom incivility.

Bjorklund and Rehling's (2010) research is extremely useful because it highlighted the importance of using student perceptions of incivility as a guide to identify specific behaviors for faculty members to target in the attempt to reduce student incivility. To expand, McKinne and Martin (2010) sought to examine both faculty and student perceptions of incivility in an effort to compare both groups' perceptions of frequency and type of incivility in the classroom. Participants included 52 tenured and tenure track college faculty members and 197 undergraduate students from midwestern states. McKinne and Martin concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in faculty and student perceptions about which behaviors were uncivil and about the frequency of the uncivil behaviors in the classroom. Students reported a higher frequency of disappointed groans, student conversations, sarcastic remarks and gestures, cell phone interruptions and students challenging the professor's knowledge. Faculty members reported a higher frequency of students coming to class unprepared. Interestingly, faculty members considered students unprepared for class to be highly uncivil; students did not. Additionally, because students identified their classmates' inappropriate behaviors as uncivil, more so than faculty, they seemed to support the notion established by Bjorklund

and Rehling that students were well aware of incivilities and considered the behaviors disruptive to the learning process.

Summary

Recent studies have shed new light on student incivility by examining the perceptions of both faculty members and students, the two key stakeholders when dealing with student incivility. Moreover, the review of literature clearly indicated that student incivility is increasing in the college classroom and cannot be ignored. The negative impact of student incivility reaches far beyond the classroom. Weeks (2011) captured the classroom incivility crisis, noting that “without a thoughtful and competent response, it’s quite possible that civility as a notion and virtue won’t endure much longer” (p. 8).

In the following chapter, the methodology for the current study, which attempted to explore both faculty members’ and students’ experiences with classroom incivility, and to determine which specific behaviors both groups perceived to occur most frequently and were the most disruptive to the learning process, will be described.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter II provided a review of the relevant literature centering on the negative impact of classroom incivility. The negative impact of student classroom incivility has garnered the attention of college administrators, faculty, and students as they all have experienced an increasing level of uncivil and disruptive behaviors in college classrooms (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Uncivil student classroom behaviors are blamed for disrupting the learning process, and weakening the faculty-student relationship, leading to a decrease in faculty morale, and reducing student retention rates across the nation (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Seidmann, 2005; Nordstrom, et al., 2009).

The body of previous research that is focused on classroom incivility is limited (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Boice, 1996; McKinne & Martin, 2010). The current study explored and compared faculty and student perceptions of types and frequencies of classroom incivility in a college setting. Chapter III provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology used to answer the research questions in this study. Additionally, the research design, population sample, data collection, analytical methods, and limitations will be addressed in this chapter.

In order to explore faculty and student perceptions of classroom incivility, the following research questions were developed:

Research Question 1. What specific behaviors are defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 2. What differences exist in the definitions of uncivil classroom behaviors between faculty and students?

Research Question 3. What is the perceived frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 4. What differences exist between the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between the perceived frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility attached to the behavior as identified by faculty and students?

Research Design

The current study was designed to explore faculty and undergraduate student perceptions of types and frequency of classroom incivility. A quantitative non-experimental fixed research design was employed in this study. This type of methodology was appropriate because it allowed “the researcher to identify the characteristics of an observed phenomenon and investigate possible correlations among two or more phenomenon” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010, p. 182). The data gathered and analyzed was based on faculty and students’ reports of the observed phenomenon of uncivil behaviors in the classroom. Through survey research, the possibility of a relationship between the frequency and type of incivility as reported by the two groups of respondents was explored.

Research Question 1. What specific behaviors are defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty and students?

To answer the first research question, the researcher employed descriptive statistics. Faculty members and students examined a list of 21 uncivil behaviors and indicated if the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert scale. The response options were as follows: 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). The mean rating for each behavior as submitted by the faculty respondent group and the student respondent group was calculated. Then, based on the results of this calculation, the behaviors were ranked in order of incivility, from most uncivil to least uncivil, for each group.

Research Question 2. What differences exist in definitions of uncivil classroom behaviors between faculty and students?

To answer the second research question, *t*-tests for independent means were computed to analyze faculty and student responses to the type of incivility for each of the 21 uncivil behaviors listed in the survey. Robson (2002) stated that a *t*-test is typically used when a researcher is attempting to explore differences in mean scores between two groups. Faculty and students examined the list of 21 uncivil behaviors and indicated whether the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert scale. The response options were as follows: 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). A *t*-test was computed and analyzed to compare the faculty and student responses to each of the 21 behaviors. The researcher compared the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level in order to determine the statistical significance of the differences between faculty and student perceptions for those behaviors that were considered most uncivil.

Examples of the uncivil behaviors included acting bored or apathetic, sleeping in class, leaving class early, and not taking notes in class.

Research Question 3. What is the perceived frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

To answer the third research question, the researcher employed descriptive statistics similar to those utilized to address the first research question. Faculty and students were asked to rate the same 21 uncivil student behaviors using a 6-point Likert response scale regarding how frequently both groups observed the uncivil behaviors during the first 8 weeks of the fall semester. The response options were as follows: 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), and 6 (5 or more times). The mean rating for the frequency of each behavior observed by faculty and students was calculated. The behaviors were then listed in rank order, from most frequently observed to least frequently observed.

Research Question 4. What differences exist in the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as perceived by faculty members and students?

To answer the fourth research question, the researcher employed statistics similar to those used in addressing the second research question. Faculty and students were asked to rate the same 21 behaviors with a 6-point Likert scale regarding how frequently they observed each behavior in the classroom during the first 8 weeks of the fall semester. The response options were as follows: 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), and 6 (5 or more times). A *t*-test for independent means was used to compare the faculty and students' mean responses for the frequency of each of the 21 behaviors. The researcher compared the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level in order to

determine any statistically significant differences in perceived frequency of each behavior as provided by faculty and student groups.

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between the frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior as identified by faculty and students?

In order to determine whether a relationship existed between the frequency of an uncivil behavior and the perceived intensity of the behavior, as reported by faculty members and students, Spearman's rank order correlation analysis was performed on the mean frequency score and mean type score for both groups of respondents. A Spearman rank order correlation was appropriate because the frequency of incivility of each behavior and the intensity of incivility for each behavior involved rank-order data that was ordinal in nature (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The researcher completed this analysis to determine whether a correlation existed between a behavior's intensity of incivility and the frequency at which the uncivil behavior occurred. For example, would a specific uncivil behavior, such as walking into class late, be considered more uncivil if it were perceived to be occurring with a higher degree of frequency?

Population

The population for this study included all full-time and part-time tenured and tenure track faculty members employed at a small, private, nonsectarian Midwestern college and all full-time and part-time undergraduate students enrolled in the college. The target institution was unique because it consisted of two campuses with different missions. The first campus offered two associate degree programs and one baccalaureate degree program. Its mission centered on traditional students. The other campus, located

35 miles north of the first, offered baccalaureate degree programs to nontraditional students. This campus also offered certificate programs in cosmetology and massage therapy. Cosmetology and massage therapy students and instructors were not included in the study in order to ensure that the population was limited to undergraduate college students and faculty members. The researcher determined that there was a potential for 98 faculty members available in the population. There were 1,123 undergraduate students enrolled at the target college and available in the convenience sample.

Of the 49 faculty members who chose to participate, 59.2% (29) were full-time and 40.8% (20) were part-time. Other demographic information collected included age, race, years of teaching experience, and teaching discipline. Of the faculty participants, 8.2% (4) were between 20 and 30 years old, 30.6% (15) were between 31 and 40 years old, 22.4% (11) were between 41 and 50 years old, 16.3% (8) were between 51 and 60 years old, and 22.4% (11) were between 61 and 70 years old. The faculty group was rather homogenous racially: 91.8% (45) were Caucasian; 2.0% (1) were African American; 2.0% (1) were Multiracial, and 4.2% (2) were other. Regarding faculty teaching disciplines, 28.6% (14) represented English/Humanities, 26.5% (13) represented social sciences, 26.5% (13) represented math and science, 4.1% (2) represented physical education, and 14.3% (7) represented faculty teaching in only 300 and 400 level courses. For detailed information related to faculty member respondent demographic information, refer to Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1

Age Information for Faculty Members

Age	<i>n</i>	%
20 –30	4	8.2
31-40	15	30.6
41-50	11	22.4
51-60	8	16.3
61-70	11	22.4

Table 2

Race Information for Faculty Members

Race	<i>n</i>	%
Caucasian	45	91.8
Other	2	4.2
African American	1	2.0
Multiracial	1	2.0

Table 3

Teaching Discipline for Faculty Members

Teaching Discipline	<i>n</i>	%
English/Humanities	14	28.6
Social Science	13	26.5
Math/Science	13	26.5
Baccalaureate (upper division courses)	7	14.3
Physical Education		4.1

Student participants came from the population of undergraduate students enrolled during the fall 2011 semester at the target institution. Out of the 450 students who participated in the study, 30.4% (132) were African American, .2% (1) were Asian American, 54.6% (237) were Caucasian, 5.3% (23) were Hispanic, 3.7% (16) were two or more races, and 5.8% (25) were other. Sixteen respondents did not answer this question. The student participants represented 29.7% (129) freshmen, 32.7% (142) sophomores, 17.3% (75) juniors, and 15.2% (66) seniors. Twenty-two, or 5.1%, indicated “other” for class year and 16 students did not answer this question. The student participants designated the following as their programs of study: 2.6% (11) broadcasting, 2.1% (9) English, 20.1% (85) general studies, .5% (2) history, 1.2% (5) music, 24.1% (102) business, 14.4% (61) criminal justice, .5% (2) mathematics, 12.1% (51) health service administration, 4.0% (17) sport management, 21.7% (92) liberal arts; 27 students

did not answer this question. For detailed information regarding student respondent demographic information, please refer to Tables 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4

Race Information for Students

Race	<i>n</i>	%
Caucasian	237	54.6
African American	132	30.4
Other	25	5.8
Hispanic	23	5.3
Biracial	16	3.7
Asian	1	0.2

Note. Sixteen students did not respond to the question.

Table 5

Class Information for Students

Class	<i>n</i>	%
Freshman	129	29.7
Sophomore	142	32.7
Junior	75	17.3
Senior	66	15.2
Other	22	5.1

Note. Sixteen students did not respond the question.

Table 6

Program of Study Information for Students

Program of Study	<i>n</i>	%
Business	102	24.1
Liberal Arts	92	21.7
General Studies	85	20.1
Criminal Justice	61	14.4
Health Services Administration	51	12.1
Sports Management	17	4.0
Broadcasting	11	2.6
English	9	2.1
Music	5	1.2
History	2	0.5
Math	2	0.5

Note. Twenty-seven students did not respond to the question.

Data Collection

Permission was secured from McKinne and Martin (2010) to use two of their surveys for this research study. The permission email can be found in Appendix A. Faculty members completed the survey, *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*, and students completed the survey, *Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*. The surveys can be found in Appendix B and C, respectively. Each survey included a list of 21 behaviors that were considered uncivil, based on a review of literature. A Likert rating

scale was used to determine faculty member and student perceptions of the intensity and frequency of the 21 uncivil behaviors. Participants in both respondent groups were asked to indicate, using a three-point scale, whether they considered a behavior (1) always, (2) under some conditions, or (3) never uncivil. To measure the frequency of the behavior, respondents were asked to complete a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never observing the uncivil behavior) to 6 (observing the behavior five or more times) during the first 10 weeks of the fall semester.

McKinne and Martin (2010) established face validity through pilot testing and made appropriate revisions based on feedback from a group of faculty and students familiar with student incivility. Moreover, the instrument was analyzed for test-re-test reliability, producing a correlation coefficient of 0.721, indicating stability. McKinne and Martin reported that 49.2% of all survey responses were answered similarly in a test-retest reliability measure to indicate consistency.

To protect and acknowledge the rights of all participants, both surveys provided an electronic informed consent on the first page of the survey that explained respondents' rights during the data collection. To ensure that respondents understood their rights, the survey required an affirmative response to the consent form before respondents could continue with the survey. No data was collected without the electronic informed consent from the participants.

The *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility* survey was distributed to faculty members after the 10th week of the semester. It was important to collect the data regarding uncivil classroom behaviors after the classroom culture had several weeks to develop at the start of the school year. Collecting data too early in the semester could

have made it difficult to estimate the correct frequency of the observed uncivil behaviors. The 42-item survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete. All employed full-time and part-time faculty members received the survey from Survey Monkey via their individual campus email address. The initial email to faculty members included a brief introduction to the research and an invitation to participate by clicking on the link to the electronic survey via Survey Monkey, *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*.

The students enrolled in the research institution did not typically use their individual campus email. Therefore, in order to garner a suitable response rate, the researcher solicited participation from students through various advertising strategies. During the two weeks of data collection, an announcement that included an invitation to participate in the survey and the link to the survey was posted on the electronic banner that greeted students when they logged into the college's learning management system. Consequently, any time a student would sign on to the learning management system, he or she would be greeted with an invitation on the banner to participate in the classroom incivility survey. Additionally, over 100 paper signs and posters that included the link to the survey were posted on building walls, entrances, and tabletops in the cafeteria, residence halls, and student commons areas on both campuses.

In order to increase the response rate further, students were offered an opportunity to win one of three \$50 cash cards for participating in the survey. This incentive appeared in all advertisements. In order to participate in the random drawing, the students were required to provide their school identification number at the end of the survey. The researcher used simple random sampling to select three student winners and delivered the cash cards to them personally.

Analytical Methods

As stated previously, the purpose of this research was to explore undergraduate faculty and student perceptions and experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil student behaviors and increase student success. Additionally, the researcher attempted to investigate the relationship between the reported frequencies of an uncivil behavior to the reported specific behavior. Each research question had a between-subject factor because both the faculty members and students were only surveyed a single time. All data were collected through survey research: faculty members completed the *Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility* and undergraduate students completed the *Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility*. The results were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 19 (SPSS v. 19) for analysis.

Descriptive statistics were employed in order to answer the first research question that explored the specific behaviors defined as uncivil classroom behaviors by faculty and students. The coding for the intensity was inverted for analysis to align the higher degree of intensity of the uncivil behavior with the number of higher value. For example, the survey provided the Likert scale of 1 (always), 2 (sometimes), and 3 (never). To help improve clarity in understanding the data, always was coded as a three, sometimes coded as a two, and never was coded as a one. Therefore, the uncivil behaviors that scored a higher mean number would represent the most uncivil behaviors. In order to determine the rank assigned to the 21 behaviors, the mean rating for each behavior as submitted by faculty and students was calculated and then the behaviors were listed in rank order of incivility, from most uncivil to least uncivil for each group of respondents.

The second research question explored the differences between faculty and student definitions of uncivil behaviors. Independent sample *t*-tests were computed and analyzed that compared faculty and student mean responses to each of the 21 behaviors. Statistical significance was determined at the $p < .05$ level.

The third research question centered on the perceived frequency of the 21 uncivil behaviors as reported by the faculty and students. The same analysis was applied for this research question that was employed for the first research question. However, it was not necessary to invert the frequency scores because the lower numbers on the Likert scale aligned with lower numbers of frequency. The mean rating for the frequency of each behavior observed by faculty and students was calculated. The behaviors were then listed in rank order, from most frequently observed to least frequently observed.

The fourth research question explored the differences between frequency of uncivil behaviors as reported by faculty and student groups. The same analysis was applied to this research question that was employed in the second research question. Independent sample *t*-tests were computed and analyzed to compare faculty and student 21 behaviors. Statistical significance was determined at the $p < .05$ level.

The fifth research question explored the relationship between the intensity of the uncivil behavior and the frequency of the behavior as reported by faculty and students. Spearman's rank order correlation was performed on the relationship of frequency of the 21 uncivil behaviors and intensity of the uncivil behaviors as reported by both groups.

Limitations

The sample used in the study consisted of faculty members and students from a small, private, nonsectarian Midwestern college. This convenience sample was limited to

the population employed or who attended the researcher's college of employment. Great caution should be used before generalizing the results of this study to other private colleges and the results should not be generalized to other types of institutions such as larger public universities or community colleges.

A noted limitation of the study was the fact that in the demographic section of both surveys, there was not an option provided for respondents to identify gender. Although gender was not a factor in any of the research questions, gender is important information that could be used for future analysis of the collected data. Additionally, the Likert scale used to identify the intensity of the uncivil behaviors could have provided a clearer picture of degrees of intensity if the available range was more than a 3-point scale.

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) noted that a common limitation to survey research is that the data is based on self-reported information. Respondents may answer questions in a way that presents them in the most positive light. Self-serving bias could have been present for both faculty members and students in responding to the surveys that centered on classroom incivility. For example, even though anonymity was promised, it is possible that some faculty members did not report the true frequency of the uncivil behaviors in their classrooms to avoid the appearance of poor classroom management skills or a concern for professional repercussions for admitting to a high degree of incivility in their classes. Moreover, student respondents could have been biased in their responses due to a reluctance to rate a behavior they would regularly exhibit as highly uncivil.

Another possible limitation associated with this study centered on the utilization of Survey Monkey, an online survey method. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) noted that online surveys might limit the pool of respondents to people who are familiar and comfortable

with computers, spending time on the Internet, enjoy participating in research studies, and are interested in the research topic.

Summary

This chapter has provided an explanation of the methodology used for the exploration of faculty and student perceptions of classroom incivility. The following chapter will provide an analysis of the data collected in this research. Additionally, information will be presented concerning the conclusions gleaned from the data and implications and recommendations for continued research in the area of classroom incivility in higher education.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

This study was conducted to identify undergraduate faculty and student experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil classroom behaviors and increase student success. The focus of this study centered on faculty and student perceptions about the degree and frequency of classroom incivility in higher education.

Classroom student incivility has been identified by college administrators, faculty members, and students as having a major negative impact on student success in higher education (Boice, 1996; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001; Lampman et al., 2009; McKinne & Martin, 2010). Increasing levels of student classroom incivility have been linked to a decline in student learning, lower faculty morale, and reduced student retention rates at colleges across the country. Researchers found that mild-to-moderate acts of classroom incivility were reported to occur most frequently and caused the most disruption to the learning process (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Feldmann; McKinne & Martin). Examples of student mild-to-moderate acts of classroom incivility included acting bored or apathetic, using cell phones inappropriately, sleeping in class, challenging the instructor's knowledge or credibility, and using vulgarity toward others in class. Feldmann stated that if acts of incivility were not addressed at the mild-to-moderate levels, they would likely escalate in severity.

Therefore, it was important to explore faculty member and student perceptions of classroom incivility in order to identify specific behaviors to target to assist faculty members who seek to curb student classroom incivility. The specific research questions used to guide this study follow.

Research Question 1. What specific behaviors are defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 2. What differences exist in the definitions of uncivil classroom behaviors between faculty and students?

Research Question 3. What is the perceived frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 4. What differences exist between the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as reported by faculty and students?

Research Question 5. What is the relationship between the perceived frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility attached to the behavior as identified by faculty and students?

A quantitative, non-experimental fixed research design was employed in this study. Quantitative data was collected from undergraduate faculty members and students at a small, private, nonsectarian Midwestern college through administering a survey and entering the data into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16.0.

Findings

Research Question One

In order to answer the first research question, the researcher identified the specific behaviors defined as uncivil classroom behaviors as reported by faculty members and

students using general descriptive statistics. Faculty members and students examined a list of 21 uncivil behaviors and indicated whether the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert scale. The response options were as follows: 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). For the analysis, the coding for the degree of incivility was reversed to align the higher degree of incivility with the higher value. To help improve clarity in understanding the data, *always* was coded as a 3, *sometimes* was coded as a 2, and *never* was coded as a 1. Therefore, the uncivil behaviors that scored a higher mean number would represent the most uncivil behaviors. The mean rating for each behavior as submitted by the faculty respondent group and the student respondent group was calculated. Then, based on the results of this calculation, the behaviors were ranked in order of the degree of incivility, from most uncivil to least uncivil, for each group.

Displayed in Table 7 are the descriptive statistics representing responses from the faculty group to this question. The behaviors that were considered the most uncivil included cheating on exams or quizzes ($M = 2.896$), harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = 2.878$), students' conversations distracting other students ($M = 2.857$), hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom ($M = 2.857$), students taunting or belittling other students ($M = 2.857$), threats of physical harm against you ($M = 2.857$), and vulgarity directed at you in the classroom ($M = 2.857$). The behaviors that were considered the least uncivil included students creating tension by dominating discussion ($M = 2.184$), students leaving class early ($M = 2.184$), acting bored or apathetic ($M = 2.102$), not paying attention in class ($M = 2.042$), students cutting class ($M = 2.000$), and not taking notes during class ($M = 1.204$).

Table 7
Faculty Opinions on Degree of Incivility

Behaviors	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Cheating on exams or quizzes	48	2.896	0.371	0.054
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	49	2.878	0.484	0.069
Students' conversations distracting other students	49	2.857	0.354	0.051
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	49	2.857	0.500	0.071
Students taunting or belittling other students	49	2.857	0.500	0.071
Threats of physical harm against you	49	2.857	0.500	0.071
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	49	2.857	0.500	0.071
Students' conversations distracting you	49	2.694	0.548	0.078
Cell phone disruptions during class	49	2.673	0.474	0.068
Sleeping in class	49	2.633	0.566	0.081
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	49	2.571	0.612	0.087
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	49	2.490	0.681	0.097
Disapproving groans	49	2.469	0.581	0.083
Student arriving late for class	49	2.449	0.580	0.083
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	49	2.306	0.585	0.084
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	49	2.184	0.565	0.081
Students leaving class early	49	2.184	0.565	0.081
Acting bored or apathetic	49	2.102	0.467	0.067
Not paying attention in class	48	2.042	0.544	0.079
Students cutting class	49	2.000	0.791	0.113
Not taking notes during class	49	1.204	0.612	0.087

The student responses to the same question are displayed in Table 8. The student group identified the following behaviors as the most uncivil: students' conversations distracting you ($M = 2.319$), students taunting or belittling other students ($M = 2.298$), harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = 2.291$), students' conversations distracting other students ($M = 2.290$), and cell phone disruptions in class ($M = 2.287$). Both faculty members and students identified hostile and verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom and vulgarity directed at you in the classroom as their sixth and seventh most uncivil behaviors. Students' least uncivil classroom behaviors were not paying attention in class ($M = 1.993$), students cutting class ($M = 1.936$), students leaving class early ($M = 1.930$), students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class ($M = 1.909$), and not taking notes during class ($M = 1.738$).

Table 8

Student Opinions on Degree of Incivility

Behaviors	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Students' conversations distracting you	408	2.319	0.740	0.037
Students taunting or belittling other students	406	2.298	0.882	0.044
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	409	2.291	0.911	0.045
Students' conversations distracting other students	407	2.290	0.749	0.037
Cell phone disruptions during class	411	2.287	0.743	0.037
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	410	2.259	0.923	0.046
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	409	2.257	0.905	0.045
Threats of physical harm against you	406	2.256	0.942	0.047
Cheating on exams or quizzes	409	2.254	0.907	0.045
Sleeping in class	407	2.229	0.821	0.041
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	408	2.225	0.770	0.038
Disapproving groans	408	2.125	0.740	0.037
Student arriving late for class	410	2.078	0.617	0.030
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	408	2.066	0.763	0.038
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	409	2.051	0.721	0.036
Acting bored or apathetic	408	2.017	0.563	0.028
Not paying attention in class	409	1.993	0.640	0.032
Students cutting class	407	1.936	0.747	0.037
Students leaving class early	402	1.930	0.643	0.032
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	408	1.909	0.679	0.034
Not taking notes during class	409	1.738	0.628	0.031

Research Question Two

In order to answer the second research question and identify the differences that existed between faculty members' and students' ranking of the degree of incivility assigned to each behavior, the researcher employed inferential statistics. Specifically, *t*-tests for independent means were used to compare faculty and student mean responses to the degree of incivility for each of the 21 uncivil behaviors listed in the survey. Faculty and students examined the list of 21 uncivil behaviors and indicated whether the behavior constituted incivility by rating each behavior on a 3-point Likert scale. The response options were as follows: 1 (always), 2 (under some conditions), and 3 (never). Again, the response options were reversed for analysis purposes. A *t*-test was used to compare the faculty and student mean responses to each of the 21 behaviors. The researcher compared the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level.

As displayed on Table 9, a negative mean difference indicated that faculty members found a behavior to be more uncivil than the student group. In particular, faculty found cheating on exams or quizzes ($M = -0.642, p < 0.05$), threats of physical harm ($M = -0.601, p < 0.05$), vulgarity directed at you in the classroom ($M = -0.600, p < 0.05$), hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom ($M = -0.599, p < 0.05$), and harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = -0.587, p < 0.05$) as more statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level than the student group.

Table 9

Comparing Degree of Incivility for Students and Faculty

<i>t</i> -test for Equality of Means							
	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Acting bored or apathetic	-1.013	454	.312	-.085	.084	-.249	.080
Cell phone disruptions during class	* -5.008	80	.000	-.386	.077	-.539	-.232
Cheating on exams or quizzes	* -9.181	129	.000	-.642	.070	-.780	-.503
Disapproving groans	-3.144	455	.002	-.344	.110	-.560	-.129
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	* -7.104	95	.000	-.587	.083	-.751	-.423
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	* -7.064	93	.000	-.599	.085	-.767	-.430
Not paying attention in class	-0.509	455	.611	-.049	.096	-.238	.140
Not taking notes during class	* 5.761	61	.000	.534	.093	.349	.720
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	* -3.625	68	.001	-.346	.095	-.536	-.156
Sleeping in class	* -4.463	75	.000	-.404	.091	-.585	-.224
Student arriving late for class	-4.004	457	.000	-.371	.093	-.553	-.189
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	-3.919	455	.000	-.397	.101	-.596	-.198
Students' conversations distracting other students	* -9.049	110	.000	-.567	.063	-.691	-.443
Students' conversations distracting you	* -4.343	71	.000	-.375	.086	-.548	-.203
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	-1.240	456	.216	-.132	.107	-.342	.077
Students cutting class	-0.562	454	.574	-.064	.114	-.287	.159
Students leaving class early	-2.634	449	.009	-.253	.096	-.442	-.064
Students taunting or belittling other students	* -6.674	89	.000	-.559	.084	-.726	-.393
Threats of physical harm against you	* -7.040	96	.000	-.601	.085	-.770	-.432
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	-3.710	455	.000	-.424	.114	-.648	-.199
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	* -7.124	91	.000	-.600	.084	-.768	-.433

* Data failed homogeneity test (Levine's) at the 0.05 level. *t*-tests for unequal variances used.

Research Question Three

To answer the third research question and explore the faculty and student group perceptions of the frequency of classroom uncivil behaviors, the researcher employed descriptive statistics. Faculty and students were asked to rate the same 21 uncivil student behaviors using a 6-point Likert response scale regarding how frequently both groups observed the uncivil behaviors. The response options were as follows: 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), and 6 (5 or more times). The mean rating for the frequency of each behavior observed by the faculty and student group was calculated. The data failed Levine's test for homogeneity, indicating that the researcher could not assume equal variances in the mean scores (Robson, 2002). The behaviors were then listed in rank order, from most frequently observed to least frequently observed. The descriptive statistics representing responses from the faculty group to this question are displayed in Table 10. For the faculty group, behaviors identified as most frequently observed were not paying attention in class ($M = 5.261$), student arriving late for class ($M = 5.156$), not taking notes in class ($M = 5.156$), acting bored or apathetic ($M = 4.935$), and students cutting class ($M = 4.826$). The faculty group identified the least frequently occurring uncivil behaviors as hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom ($M = 1.326$), students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class ($M = 1.222$), harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = 1.196$), vulgarity directed at you in the classroom ($M = 1.152$), and threats of physical harm against you ($M = 1.022$).

Table 10

Faculty Opinions on Frequency of Uncivil Behaviors

Behaviors	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Not paying attention in class	46	5.261	1.307	0.193
Not taking notes during class	45	5.156	1.678	0.250
Student arriving late for class	45	5.156	1.296	0.193
Acting bored or apathetic	46	4.935	1.436	0.212
Students cutting class	46	4.826	1.768	0.261
Students' conversations distracting other students	45	4.000	1.719	0.256
Cell phone disruptions during class	46	4.000	1.850	0.273
Students' conversations distracting you	43	3.465	1.777	0.271
Students leaving class early	45	3.444	1.902	0.283
Sleeping in class	45	3.333	1.692	0.252
Disapproving groans	46	2.826	1.780	0.262
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	46	2.696	1.724	0.254
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	46	2.565	1.846	0.272
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	46	1.826	1.060	0.156
Cheating on exams or quizzes	46	1.609	1.105	0.163
Students taunting or belittling other students	46	1.522	1.090	0.161
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	46	1.326	0.668	0.099
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	45	1.222	0.471	0.070
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	46	1.196	0.806	0.119
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	46	1.152	0.759	0.112
Threats of physical harm against you	46	1.022	0.147	0.022

As displayed in Table 11, the student group identified the most frequently observed uncivil classroom behaviors as threats of physical harm against you ($M = 5.753$), vulgarity directed at you in the classroom ($M = 5.659$), hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom ($M = 5.537$), harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = 5.482$), students taunting or belittling other students ($M = 5.235$), and cheating on exams or quizzes ($M = 5.195$). The student group identified the least frequently occurring behaviors as cell phone disruptions during class ($M = 3.266$), acting bored or apathetic ($M = 3.228$), not taking notes during class ($M = 3.131$), not paying attention in class ($M = 3.046$), and student arriving late for class ($M = 2.936$).

Table 11
Student Opinions on Frequency of Uncivil Behaviors

Behaviors	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Threats of physical harm against you	388	5.753	0.881	0.045
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	390	5.659	1.006	0.051
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	391	5.537	1.106	0.056
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	392	5.482	1.197	0.060
Students taunting or belittling other students	392	5.235	1.415	0.071
Cheating on exams or quizzes	384	5.195	1.422	0.073
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	392	5.020	1.466	0.074
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	389	4.650	1.729	0.088
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	390	4.367	1.812	0.092
Sleeping in class	390	4.272	1.935	0.098
Disapproving groans	387	4.266	1.703	0.087
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	391	4.238	1.811	0.092
Students leaving class early	385	3.844	1.764	0.090
Students' conversations distracting you	392	3.834	1.847	0.093
Students cutting class	390	3.831	1.954	0.099
Students' conversations distracting other students	392	3.684	1.781	0.090
Cell phone disruptions during class	391	3.266	1.884	0.095
Acting bored or apathetic	390	3.228	1.813	0.092
Not taking notes during class	390	3.131	1.853	0.094
Not paying attention in class	389	3.046	1.827	0.093
Student arriving late for class	389	2.936	1.803	0.091

Research Question Four

To answer the fourth research question, the researcher used inferential statistics to explore the differences in the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom as perceived by faculty and students. Faculty and students rated the same 21 behaviors with a 6-point Likert scale to indicate how frequently they observed each behavior in the classroom. The response options were as follows: 1 (never), 2 (once), 3 (twice), 4 (three times), 5 (four times), and 6 (5 or more times). A *t*-test for independent means was used to compare the faculty and students' mean responses for the frequency of each of the 21 behaviors. The data failed Levine's homogeneity test, indicating that the researcher could not assume equal variances between scores. A comparison was made of the significance of each item at the $p < .05$ level.

As displayed in Table 12, a positive mean difference indicated that the faculty group observed a behavior less often, and a negative mean difference indicated that the student group observed the behavior less often. The faculty group was more likely to notice covert uncivil behaviors such as students cutting class ($M = -1.657, p < 0.0005$), not paying attention in class ($M = -1.307, p < 0.0005$), not taking notes in class ($M = -1.286, p < 0.0005$), acting bored or apathetic ($M = -1.163, p < 0.0005$), and students arriving late for class ($M = -1.091, p < 0.0005$). The study results indicated that the student group reported a higher frequency of overt uncivil behaviors in the classroom. Students noticed the following behaviors with a higher frequency than faculty members did: students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class ($M = 0.757, p < 0.0005$), students creating tension by dominating discussion ($M = 0.524, p < 0.005$), harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom ($M = 0.322, p <$

0.018), and threats of physical harm against you ($M = 0.226, p < 0.0005$). In summary, regarding the frequency of uncivil behaviors in the classroom, faculty members identified the more mild uncivil behaviors and the student group clearly observed the more serious uncivil behaviors in the classroom environment.

Table 12

Comparing Frequency of Incivility for Students and Faculty

	t-test for Equality of Means							
	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
						Lower	Upper	
Acting bored or apathetic	*	-5.039	63	.000	-1.163	.231	-1.624	-.702
Cell phone disruptions during class		-0.907	435	.365	-.266	.293	-.842	.310
Cheating on exams or quizzes	*	1.099	64	.276	.196	.178	-.160	.552
Disapproving groans		-0.346	431	.730	-.092	.267	-.617	.432
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	*	2.417	71	.018	.322	.133	.056	.588
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	*	1.207	78	.231	.137	.113	-.089	.362
Not paying attention in class	*	-6.113	68	.000	-1.307	.214	-1.734	-.880
Not taking notes during class	*	-4.814	57	.000	-1.286	.267	-1.821	-.751
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling		0.237	435	.813	.066	.281	-.486	.619
Sleeping in class	*	-2.236	58	.029	-.605	.271	-1.147	-.063
Student arriving late for class	*	-5.106	66	.000	-1.091	.214	-1.518	-.664
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	*	7.420	172	.000	.757	.102	.556	.959
Students' conversations distracting other students		-2.447	435	.015	-.684	.279	-1.233	-.135
Students' conversations distracting you		-1.012	433	.312	-.299	.296	-.880	.282
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	*	2.920	77	.005	.524	.179	.167	.881
Students cutting class		-5.492	434	.000	-1.657	.302	-2.250	-1.064
Students leaving class early		-1.030	428	.304	-.289	.280	-.839	.262
Students taunting or belittling other students	*	1.385	64	.171	.244	.176	-.108	.595
Threats of physical harm against you	*	4.539	400	.000	.226	.050	.128	.323
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class		0.241	434	.810	.068	.283	-.488	.624
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	*	1.536	65	.129	.189	.123	-.057	.434

* Data failed homogeneity test (Levine's) at the 0.05 level. *t*-tests for unequal variances used.

Research Question Five

To answer the fifth research question, the researcher analyzed the relationship between the degree of incivility assigned to a behavior and the frequency of the uncivil behavior for each group. The researcher employed a Spearman's rank order correlation of the frequency and the degree of incivility as reported by faculty and as reported by students. An analysis was conducted to determine if a relationship existed between how often a behavior was observed and the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior. In other words, if respondents observed a particular uncivil behavior more often, would the increased frequency of the behavior be related to the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior? For example, would disapproving groans be considered more uncivil if it was observed more frequently in the classroom? The results of the Spearman rank correlation of the degree of incivility and the frequency of incivility for the faculty group is displayed in Table 13. Only one uncivil behavior, student arriving late for class, resulted in a statistically significant positive correlation ($r(47) = 0.35, p < 0.05$). Salkind (2011) defined a correlation between .2 and .4 as a weak correlation. Thus, this researcher was unable to predict how accurately the faculty group related the frequency of the uncivil behaviors to the degree of incivility assigned to the same behaviors.

Table 13

Correlation of Degree of Incivility by Frequency for Faculty

Question	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Acting bored or apathetic	0.276	0.063
Cell phone disruptions during class	0.167	0.267
Cheating on exams or quizzes	-0.043	0.778
Disapproving groans	-0.282	0.057
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	0.081	0.591
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	0.015	0.922
Not paying attention in class	0.045	0.771
Not taking notes during class	-0.098	0.522
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	-0.005	0.969
Sleeping in class	0.063	0.683
Student arriving late for class	0.350*	0.019
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	-0.034	0.826
Students' conversations distracting other students	0.229	0.130
Students' conversations distracting you	0.294	0.056
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	0.126	0.402
Students cutting class	0.015	0.922
Students leaving class early	0.072	0.640
Students taunting or belittling other students	0.191	0.204
Threats of physical harm against you	0.046	0.762
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	0.069	0.648
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	-0.204	0.174

* $p < 0.05$ level (2-tailed)

The results of the Spearman rank correlation of the degree of incivility by the frequency of incivility for the student group are displayed in Table 14. The student group reported a stronger positive relationship between the frequency of an uncivil behavior and the degree of incivility assigned to that behavior. Fifteen of the 21 uncivil behaviors resulted in a statistically significant correlation at the .05 level. However, similar to the faculty members, the correlations were all under .3, again indicating a weak relationship

between the frequency of the uncivil behavior and the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior. For example, students' conversations distracting you $r(390) = 0.326, p < 0.01$, students leaving class early $r(383) = 0.303, p < 0.01$, student arriving late for class $r(387) = 0.267, p < 0.01$, and students' conversations distracting other students $r(390) = 0.248, p < 0.01$ are all statistically significant, yet result in a weak correlation.

Table 14

Correlation of Degree of Incivility by Frequency for Students

Question	Correlation Coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Acting bored or apathetic	0.163**	.001
Cell phone disruptions during class	0.185**	.000
Cheating on exams or quizzes	-0.126*	.013
Disapproving groans	0.071	.159
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	-0.101*	.046
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	-0.067	.186
Not paying attention in class	0.100*	.049
Not taking notes during class	0.063	.216
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	0.148**	.003
Sleeping in class	-0.081	.111
Student arriving late for class	0.267**	.000
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	0.172**	.001
Students' conversations distracting other students	0.248**	.000
Students' conversations distracting you	0.326**	.000
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	0.189**	.000
Students cutting class	0.200**	.000
Students leaving class early	0.303**	.000
Students taunting or belittling other students	-0.006	.908
Threats of physical harm against you	-0.148**	.004
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	0.097	.056
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	-0.143**	.005

* $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

** $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Conclusions

College administrators, faculty members, and students claim that incivility has a profound negative impact on the learning environment in college classrooms across the country (Boice, 1996; Clark & Springer, 2007; Feldmann, 2001; Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009). Uncivil student classroom behaviors have led to the disruption of the learning and teaching process, deterioration of the faculty-student relationship, a decrease in faculty morale, and a decrease in student retention rates. The purpose of this research was to explore undergraduate faculty and student perceptions and experiences of classroom incivility in order to provide a foundation for the development of strategies to reduce uncivil student behaviors and increase student success.

Type of incivility

Past studies revealed similar findings to the current study that faculty members and students were aware of incivility in the classroom. Moreover, both groups agreed that uncivil behaviors were a disruption to the learning process. However, contrary to Bjorklund and Rehling's (2010) findings, the current study found that faculty and student respondents identified more serious and overt behaviors as the most uncivil classroom behaviors. One explanation for the difference in findings could be that Bjorklund and Rehling's sample included public college students and the current researcher surveyed students attending a private college. The overt uncivil behaviors were considered more serious because they directly disrupted the teaching and learning process (Meyers, 2003). These classroom behaviors included harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender), students' conversations distracting other students, students taunting or belittling other students, threats of physical harm, and vulgarity as highly uncivil classroom behaviors.

Although both groups identified the more overt behaviors as the most uncivil, the faculty group rated the specific behaviors with a higher mean score, indicating that they believed that those behaviors were more uncivil.

Frequency of incivility

Regarding the frequency of uncivil behaviors, the current study revealed similar findings to McKinne and Martin's (2010) observations that the faculty group and student group had different opinions as to which uncivil behaviors occurred more frequently in the classroom. In the current study, the faculty group identified the most frequently occurring uncivil behaviors as not paying attention in class, not taking notes during class, acting bored or apathetic, and students cutting class. In contrast, the student group identified threats of physical harm, vulgarity, hostile verbal attacks or challenges, and students taunting or belittling other students as the most frequently occurring classroom behaviors. The faculty group observed the more mild and covert incivilities, behaviors that primarily only affected the individual student, as occurring most often. The student group, however, observed the more serious uncivil behaviors that involve student-to-student or student-to-faculty member interaction as the most frequent. An unexpected inverse relationship was discovered when this researcher examined the behaviors listed as the least frequently occurring classroom incivilities as reported by both groups of respondents. The faculty group identified covert uncivil behaviors such as harassing comments, vulgarity in the classroom, and threats of physical harm as the least frequently occurring uncivil behaviors. In stark contrast, the student group identified overt incivilities such as acting bored or apathetic, not taking notes, not paying attention in

class, and students arriving late for class as the least frequently occurring uncivil behaviors.

Frequency versus intensity

With one exception, i.e., students arriving late for class, the results of this study indicated that the faculty members perceived no statistically significant correlation between frequency of uncivil behaviors and the degree of incivility assigned to the specific behaviors. Faculty members found behaviors such as cheating, harassing comments, and distracting conversations as highly uncivil even though those behaviors were observed less frequently.

In contrast, several uncivil behaviors showed a statistically significant correlation between frequency and degree of incivility for the student group. Note, however, that the strength of the correlation was weak. This finding indicated that there might only be a meager relationship between the frequency of a behavior and the degree of incivility assigned to the behavior. Contrary to the faculty group, students seemed much more likely to recognize the uncivil behaviors they identified with a higher degree of incivility. For example, the students identified students' conversations distracting you, students leaving class early, and students arriving late for class as more uncivil than the other behaviors, possibly because they occurred more frequently than other behaviors. In other words, the students may not define uncivil behaviors such as sidebar conversations or a student leaving class early as a disruption if the behavior occurs with less frequency. The student group, however, indicated that the more serious offenses, such as threats of physical harm and vulgarity, were perceived as highly uncivil regardless of how many times the behaviors occurred in the classroom.

Implications and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore faculty member and student perceptions of classroom incivilities in order to create strategies to reduce uncivil behaviors and increase student success in higher education. Several researchers had launched a clarion call for the implementation of concrete requests and specific guidelines that would lead to the increase of civility in higher education (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010; Clark & Spring, 2010; Feldmann, 2001; McKinne & Martin 2010). As illustrated in the current study, and in the review of literature, both faculty and students acknowledged that student incivility in the classroom exists; therefore, it cannot be ignored. Regardless of whether the uncivil behaviors are serious or mild, they are eroding the learning environment and must be addressed. To ignore the behaviors would lead to several disastrous outcomes including a decrease in student achievement, deterioration of the student-faculty relationship, and a likely increase in incivility in the classroom.

This study was important because it added empirical evidence to the understanding of the nature of classroom incivility. Even though the student group in the current study identified the most uncivil behaviors in class as the overt incivilities, the results supported the research findings of Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) and McKinne and Martin (2010). The findings of the current study corroborate previous research that indicated that students were aware of classroom incivilities and considered the behaviors to be a detriment to the learning process. Specifically, the findings from the current study illustrated that, with the exception of cheating on exams and quizzes, the faculty group generally agreed with the students about which behaviors represented the highest degree of incivility in the classroom. Both groups identified the more serious uncivil behaviors

as problematic. Contrary to findings from Bjorklund and Rehling, the student respondents in the current study did not identify the mildest level of incivilities, i.e., text messaging, packing books before class was over, and yawning, as highly disruptive in the classroom. Nevertheless, it is important to note that while faculty members and students were in general agreement on the degree of incivility for the most uncivil behaviors, the faculty group assigned a higher mean rating. This finding indicated that faculty members found the behaviors more uncivil than the student group.

This study advanced the understanding of classroom incivilities because the results indicated disagreement between faculty and students in the frequency of specific uncivil behaviors in the classroom. Furthermore, each group reported a strong inverse relationship between the most frequently observed behaviors of their own group and the least frequently observed behaviors of their own group. Faculty members reported that the most frequently observed behaviors were the mild incivilities such as not paying attention in class, not taking notes in class, or acting bored or apathetic.

In contrast, the student group identified the more serious incivilities as the most frequently occurring, such as threats of physical harm, vulgarity, and hostile verbal attacks or challenges. The reverse was true when each group identified the least frequently occurring incivilities in the classroom. These observations present two entirely different pictures of the classroom environment. The student group's responses implied a classroom atmosphere that was at times aggressive with vulgarity, hostility, and threats to harm. The faculty group's responses implied a classroom environment that was generally passive, but with frequent yet mild displays of incivility. One possible explanation for these differences could be that faculty members are unaware of the disruptive classroom

climate because they are involved in pedagogy and teaching course content. Their focus is on presenting material, not observing classroom behaviors. Moreover, students' increased use of smart phones, tablets, and other electronic devices in the classroom can provide a means for more inconspicuous virtual classroom incivilities and may contribute to the differences between student and faculty perceptions of the frequency of specific uncivil behaviors as well. By texting, tweeting, and instant messaging in the classroom, threats and vulgarities are delivered silently from student-to-student (Braden & Smith, 2006; Galagan & Biech, 2010). This new mode of incivility provides students with a channel of communication that would be undetectable to faculty members. The current study seemed to support Feldmann's (2001) claim that by allowing students to participate in mild incivilities such as texting and cell phone use, an unintended consequence could likely lead to much more serious incivilities.

Additionally, it is possible that the student group did not report the milder incivilities as frequently occurring because they did not identify those particular behaviors as highly uncivil. Therefore, the students would not notice behaviors such as students not paying attention in class, not taking notes in class, or arriving late for class because they did not define them as uncivil classroom behaviors

Regardless of the explanation for the different views of frequency, it is important that faculty members understand that the student group identified aggressive behaviors as the most frequently occurring incivilities in the classroom. These results support implications by several researchers that classrooms containing a high degree of incivility create an atmosphere founded on hostility and anger and consequently severely damage

the learning environment (Boice, 1996; Feldmann, 2001; Frey, 2009; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004).

Strategies to Reduce Classroom Incivility

The purpose of this study focused on exploring faculty and student experiences of classroom incivility in order to develop strategies for faculty members to implement that would curb student incivility. The strategies listed below will center on reducing student incivility by encouraging faculty members to develop, practice, and implement both proactive and reactive strategies in the classroom.

The Nature of Student Incivility

Informational sessions focused on the nature of student incivility should be provided for faculty members at the target institution through faculty workshops and in-service trainings. Topics such as faculty incivility, causes of student incivility, and strategies to reduce incivility should be highlighted in the sessions. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) suggested that faculty members would be empowered to address incivility if they were informed with empirical research concerning the behaviors they should target. Therefore, in order to select behaviors to target, it is important to provide information from the current study about the faculty and student experiences with classroom incivility. Faculty members should be informed that both the faculty and student groups generally agreed on the behaviors that were most uncivil, e.g., student conversations distracting others, students taunting or belittling others, harassing comments, and hostile and verbal attacks in the classroom. However, the discussion must also include a conversation centering on the differences between the faculty and student groups in reported frequency of uncivil classroom behavior. The student group reported a

higher frequency of the overt behaviors, e.g., hostile verbal attacks, harassing comments, and students taunting and belittling other students. The faculty group identified more covert, or passive, incivilities e.g., not paying attention in class, not taking notes, and students acting bored or apathetic as the most frequent incivilities. Faculty members should reflect on possible explanations for the differences reported by the two groups in the frequency of the uncivil behaviors and be cognizant that the students are experiencing more serious uncivil behaviors in the classroom.

Proactive Strategies to Reduce Incivility

Faculty members should be provided with opportunities to establish proactive strategies to implement at the beginning of the term. For example, a civility statement focused on classroom behavioral expectations should be developed and included in course syllabi. Faculty members should be encouraged to communicate the expected behavioral classroom norms clearly and regularly throughout the first few weeks of the course. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) noted that students would be much more likely to cease uncivil behaviors if they believed that their peers, and not just faculty members, found the behaviors to be disruptive. Therefore, faculty members should be encouraged to share the results of the current study with their students and also allow the students to help develop appropriate classroom behavioral expectations. By involving the students in the process, they feel an increased sense of ownership and thus are more likely to comply with the behavioral expectations.

Additionally, professional development sessions devoted to improving the quality of the teacher-student relationship should be presented to faculty members. Weinstein et al. (2009) noted the importance of faculty members building a strong repertoire of

immediacy skills such as expressing positive nonverbal behaviors during faculty-student interaction, greeting students as they enter the classroom, and using the students' names during discussions. Also, according to Goodboy and Meyers (2009), students were much less likely to challenge their professors or behave uncivilly when they viewed the professor as approachable, warm, and friendly.

Reactive Strategies to Reduce Incivility

Based on the findings of the current study indicating that uncivil behaviors are present in the classroom, it would be beneficial to provide simulation opportunities in order to allow faculty to practice implementing reactive strategies. Reactive strategies are used to address incivility after the behavior has occurred. These strategies center on private, after class one-on-one conversations with the offending student or addressing the incivility with the class as a whole. These simulations could include students from the theatre department providing improvisational skits centered on the targeted incivilities. For example, in a mock classroom setting, a student may begin texting so that the professor can rehearse appropriate and effective ways to address the incivility. It may be beneficial to have students repeat the behavior to allow the professor to practice a second approach that may require a more firm response. As faculty members build their repertoire of appropriate responses, they are likely to feel increased confidence when dealing with classroom incivilities.

An important addition to any workshop or in-service would be the presence and participation of department heads and academic administrators. The administrators can assure faculty members that they will be supported in their efforts to address uncivil students. Administrators need to communicate to faculty members that classroom

incivility cannot be ignored, because uncivil behaviors that are not addressed in the classroom are likely to increase in severity and frequency (Feldmann, 2001). In other words, what we permit, we promote.

In sum, it is important for future researchers to explore faculty and student perceptions in other academic settings, including secondary educational settings and other post-secondary settings such as community colleges and larger public and private universities. Additionally, empirical research that explores the most effective approaches to reduce student incivility should be conducted in order to inform the development of further faculty training strategies and sessions.

The present study supported results of previous research that student incivility is present in college classrooms and that the presence of student classroom incivility is a detriment to student success. Further research into these phenomena as well as an emphasis on professional development for faculty members in order to provide opportunities to address student incivility are important next steps in reducing student incivility and increasing student success. Moreover, because student incivility is not limited to the classroom setting, it is recommended that colleges and universities work together as a campus community to reduce incivility by creating full campus initiatives that work toward improved civility on the entire campus and not limit the focus to the classroom.

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Appendix A

Permission email to use Surveys

From: Mike McKinne [<mailto:hermanblume@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2011 2:06 PM
To: BarbMartinDissertation; Tina Nutt
Subject: RE: Doctoral Research on Student Incivlity

Christina,

Thanks for reaching out to us. You may absolutely have permission to use my survey. In addition I used survey monkey.....I paid the extra fee and was able to get the raw data for the statistical analysis.

The survey was distributed electronically (email) to faculty and students at several campuses.....

Be aware that the return rate on this process can be lower than hoped/expected.....

Please let me know how I can help.....I was in the final stages of finishing three (!) years ago.....I know what it's like.

Mike McKinne
Professional Amateur

> Date: Tue, 18 Jan 2011 11:37:10 -0600
> From: bmartin@ucmo.edu
>
> CC: hermanblume@hotmail.com
> Subject: Re: Doctoral Research on Student Incivlity
>
> Christina,
>
> Hello, thank you for your interest in our research. I have attached a
> copy of the survey we used and also the survey that framed ours from
> Indiana. Perhaps these will be of benefit to your inquiry.
>
> I am including Dr McKinne, who is the author of the survey, on this
> email and he is the one that should give you permission.
> Good luck with your research.
>
> Barbara
>
> Barbara N. Martin, EdD
> Professor
> Educational Leadership and Human Development
> University of Central Missouri
> 4105 Lovinger
> Warrensburg, MO
>
> "Rosa SAT so Martin could WALK, Martin WALKED so Obama could RUN, Obama
> RAN so all children could FLY!"

> "Laissez Les Bons Temps Rouler"
> "Wakan Tanka Kici Un"
> >>> "Tina Nutt> 01/17/11 11:03 AM >>>

> Greetings. My name is Christina Nutt; I am a doctoral student at Olivet
> Nazarene University. Last May I joined ONU's Ed.D program in ethical
> leadership. The format of this program is a 3- year cohort process. As
> you can imagine, a 3-year program is quite intense. I am now in the
> process of completing my first draft of Chpt. 1 for my dissertation.

>
> I was fortunate enough to recently find your article, "Higher Education
> Faculty and Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility," As it turns
> out, my research plan is very similar to your study. I am very
> passionate about the college classroom climate--student incivility. I
> believe institutions can expend the energy and resources to support
> assessment, academic support systems, professional development,
> etc...(which are all very important) but if the classroom climate is one
> that is disruptive, and not conducive to learning, everything else may
> fail as well.

>
> I am writing to ask you if you would allow me to view (and possibly use)
> the survey instruments you referred to in your article. I would, of
> course, provide the necessary citations and credit your work in my
> research. My plan now is to distribute a survey through SurveyMonkey.
> I noticed that you electronically distributed your survey as well. Did
> you use a SurveyMonkey or Zoomerang type tool? or simply send it
> through a list-serv?

>
> I would greatly appreciate any information you could give me as I
> continue to advance the research of classroom student incivility. Thank
> you so much for any assistance you can provide. Looking forward to
> hearing from you.

> Christina M. Nutt

> >
>
>

Appendix B

Faculty Perceptions of Classroom Incivility Survey

Faculty Incivility Survey

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this study of faculty perceptions of classroom incivility. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time you wish without fear of consequence. The next page explains how you and your rights will be protected.

Faculty Incivility Survey

Dear Participant:

Thank you for considering participation in my study on classroom incivility in higher education. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in ethical leadership at Olivet Nazarene University. Your participation will take approximately 10 minutes.

Before you make the final decision about your participation, I need to explain how your rights as participants will be protected.

1. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time you wish without penalty, including in the middle of completing survey. Your consent to participate or refusal to participate will not negatively affect you in any way. You may also decline to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.
2. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at work at (309) 268-4904 or by email at tnutt@lincolncollege.edu. You may also contact my Faculty Advisor, Dr. Stanton Tuttle at (815) 928-5430 or stuttle@olivet.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please feel free to contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (309) 268-4301.
3. Confidentiality. Participants' answers will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. Only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to identifiable data. Collected data will be kept locked and destroyed three years after completion of this study. Participants identify and university affiliation will not be published. Data will be aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants at all times.
4. Risks. There are minimal risks involved. These could include an outsider observing the participant recording responses that could be considered 'negative' towards his or her institution. However, these risks are indeed minimal and no more than those occurring in daily life.
5. Benefits. By participating, you are helping contribute to the body of knowledge about Classroom Incivility in Higher Education. Additionally, this data will be used to help develop strategies to curb student incivility in the classroom which will improve the classroom learning environment for current and future students.

By completing the online survey entitled the "Classroom Incivility Survey" you agree to participate in the study of classroom incivility in higher education being conducted by Christina Nutt. By completing the survey you understand that the following safeguards are in place to protect you:

1. Your responses will be used for dissertation research and potential future publications.
2. Your participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point in the study prior to submission of the survey.
3. Your identity will be protected in all reports of the research.
4. Your consent or refusal to participate in this study will not affect you in any negative manner.

By completion of this online survey it is understood that you agree to participate in this study and waive the requirement for a written consent. Please click the "YES" button below, indicating your consent to participate. If you do not wish to continue with this survey, please click "Exit this survey" in the upper right corner.

1. Please click YES to indicate your consent to participate in this survey.

Yes

Faculty Incivility Survey

1. Please identify your teaching status:

- Full-time faculty
 Part-time faculty

2. Please identify your age:

- 20 - 30 years old 41 - 50 years old 61 - 70 years old
 31 - 40 years old 51 - 60 years old 70 +

3. Please describe yourself:

- African American Hispanic Multiracial
 Asian American Native American Puerto Rican
 Caucasian Mexican American Other

4. Please identify years of teaching experience

- 1 - 5 years 16 - 20 years
 6 - 10 years 21 + years
 11 - 15 years

5. Please identify the content area of your teaching discipline:

- English/Humanities Physical Education
 Social Sciences Baccalaureate Courses
 Math/Science

DEFINITION OF CLASSROOM INCIVILITY

Classroom incivility can be defined as any behavior that negatively affects teaching and/or learning.

Faculty Incivility Survey

1. Please indicate if you think the behavior constitutes "incivility." Mark your responses by clicking the appropriate box.

	Always	Under Some Conditions	Never
Acting bored or apathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell phone disruptions during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheating on exams or quizzes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disapproving groans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not paying attention in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not taking notes during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student arriving late for class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' conversations distracting other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' conversations distracting you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students cutting class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students leaving class early	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students taunting or belittling other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threats of physical harm against you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Faculty Incivility Survey

Vulgarity directed at you in
the classroom

Other, please specify

Faculty Incivility Survey

1. How OFTEN did you experience the same student behaviors in the classroom during the current semester (Fall 2011)?

	Never/Zero Times	One Time	Two Times	Three Times	Four Times	Five Or More Times
Acting bored or apathetic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell phone disruptions during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cheating on exams or quizzes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disapproving groans	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not paying attention in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not taking notes during class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sleeping in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student arriving late for class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' conversations distracting other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' conversations distracting you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students cutting class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students leaving class early	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students taunting or belittling other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Threats of physical harm against you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vulgarity directed at you in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Faculty Incivility Survey

the classroom

Same "Other" behavior
listed in previous question

Faculty Incivility Survey

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study of classroom incivility. Your participation will help in collecting information to be used to develop strategies to reduce student incivility in the classroom and help improve student success.

Appendix C

Student Perceptions of Classroom Incivility Survey

1. Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to take part in this study of student perceptions of classroom incivility. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from participation at any time you wish without fear of consequence. The next page explains how you and your rights will be protected.

2. Informed Consent

Dear Participant:

Thank you for considering participation in my study on classroom incivility in higher education. This study is part of my dissertation research for a doctoral degree in ethical leadership from Olivet Nazarene University. Your participation will take approximately 10 minutes.

Before you make a final decision about your participation, I need to explain how your rights as participants will be protected:

1. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from participation at any time you wish without penalty, including in the middle of completing the survey. Your consent to participate or refusal to participate will not negatively affect you in any way. You may also decline to answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering.
2. If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact me at work at (309) 268-4904 or by email at tnutt@lincolncollege.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Dr. Stanton Tuttle at (815) 928-5430 or by email at stuttle@olivet.edu. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please feel free to contact the Campus Institutional Review Board at (309) 268-4901.
3. Confidentiality. Participants' answers will remain confidential, anonymous, and separate from any identifying information. Only the researcher and the dissertation supervisor will have access to identifiable data. Collected data will be kept locked and will be destroyed three years after completion of this study. Participants' identity and university affiliation will not be published. Data will be aggregated for statistical analysis and summarized for reporting, protecting participants' confidentiality at all times.
4. Risks. There are minimal risks involved; these could include an outsider observing the participant recording responses that could be considered 'negative' towards his or her institution. However, these risks are indeed minimal and no more than those occurring in daily life.
5. Benefits. By participating, you are helping contribute to the body of knowledge about Classroom Incivility in Higher Education which can be used to improve the classroom learning environment for current and future students.

By completing the online survey entitled the "Student Incivility Survey" you agree to participate in the study of classroom incivility in higher education being conducted by Christina Nutt. By completing the survey you understand that the following safeguards are in place to protect you:

1. Your responses will be used for dissertation research and potential future publications.
2. Your participation is voluntary, and may be withdrawn at any point in the study prior to submission of the survey.
3. Your identity will be protected in all reports of the research.
4. Your consent or refusal to participate in this study will not affect you in any negative manner.

By completion of this online survey it is understood that you agree to participate in this study and waive the requirement for a written consent.

Please click "YES" to indicate your desire to participate in this survey. If you do not wish to participate in this survey, please click "Exit this survey" in the upper right corner.

*** 1. Please click YES to indicate your consent to participate in this survey.**

Yes

3. Demographic Information

1. Please indicate your status:

- Full-time student (enrolled in 12 or more credit hours)
 Part-time student (enrolled in less than 12 credit hours)
 ABE student (Accelerated Bridge to Education)

2. Please identify your class year:

- Freshman Senior
 Sophomore Other
 Junior

3. Please describe yourself:

- African American Hispanic Multiracial
 Asian American Native American Puerto Rican
 Caucasian Mexican American Other

4. Please identify your major:

- Broadcasting Music Health Services Administration
 English Business Management Sport Management
 General Studies Criminal Justice Liberal Arts
 History Mathematics

DEFINITION OF STUDENT INCIVILITY

Classroom incivility can be defined as any behavior that negatively affects teaching and/or learning in the classroom.

4.

1. Please indicate if you think the behavior constitutes "incivility." Mark your responses by clicking the appropriate box.

	Always	Under Some Conditions	Never
Acting bored or apathetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cell phone disruptions during class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cheating on exams or quizzes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disapproving groans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not paying attention in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not taking notes during class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sleeping in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student arriving late for class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students' conversations distracting other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students' conversations distracting you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students cutting class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students leaving class early	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students taunting or belittling other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threats of physical harm against you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>		

5.

1. How OFTEN did you experience (observe) the same student behaviors in the classroom during the current semester (Fall 2011)?

	Never/Zero	One Time	Two Times	Three Times	Four Times	Five or More Times
Acting bored or apathetic	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cell phone disruptions during class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cheating on exams or quizzes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disapproving groans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Harassing comments (racial, ethnic, gender) directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Hostile verbal attacks or challenges directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not paying attention in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not taking notes during class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sarcastic remarks or gestures, staged yawning or eye rolling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sleeping in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student arriving late for class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students' conversations distracting other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students' conversations distracting you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students creating tension by dominating discussion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students cutting class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students leaving class early	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students taunting or belittling other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threats of physical harm against you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using a computer during class for purposes not related to the class	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vulgarity directed at you in the classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please rate "Other"	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

behavior listed on previous
question

6.

1. If you are interested in participating in the random drawing for one of three \$50 cash cards, please provide your student I.D. number in the space below.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey regarding incivility in the classroom. Your participation will help to create strategies to improve the college classroom learning environment.