



RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTION OF INCIVILITY BEHAVIOR OF STUDENTS IN CLASSROOM AMONG THE DENTAL COLLEGES IN THE CITY OF DAVANGERE- A WEB-BASED SURVEY

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Received 20th February, 2025; Accepted 19th March, 2025; Published 25th April, 2025

ABSTRACT

Classroom incivility is emerging as one of the major problems in all academic fields and needs immediate attention. Similar results were found when a study was conducted in the University in North West England in 2009 and concluded that both teachers and students are equally responsible to maintain a positive teaching atmosphere. This survey provides better understanding of such behaviours, consequences and measures to improve them. **Aim:** The purpose of this survey was to analyze the levels of incivility as experienced by the staff in dental colleges in the city of Davangere. It is an initial attempt to empirically explore the issue of classroom incivility and obtain a beginning of an understanding of this issue. **Methods:** A web-based survey was conducted and the questionnaire was distributed through social networking sites. A self-administered structured questionnaire designed by Rowland and Sirusukho was used in the study which included 10 close-ended questions. Descriptive analytics was used for the analysis and the Cronbach coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. **Results:** A statistically significant results were observed related to the questions distributed. According to the results obtained some of the behavior exhibited by students was uncivilized. Most important among them being using cell phones in between lecture hours and sleeping during class hours. **Conclusion:** Technological development and its easy accessibility and also student dependency over same have fueled its usage. The issue of uncivil classroom behavior remains a major concern but with careful planning, a peaceful atmosphere of civility can be promoted.

Key words: Incivility, Behaviour, Faculty, Learning, Students.

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Citation: Dr. Aishwarya Arya, Dr. Prashant G M, Dr. Sushanth V.H., Dr. Vivek H P., Dr. Imranulla and Dr. Allama Prabhu, C.R. 2025. "Perception of Incivility Behavior of Students in Classroom among the dental colleges in the city of Davangere- a web-based Survey" *International Journal of Current Research in Life Sciences*, 14, (04), 3532-3534.

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Andersson and Pearson published an article in the *Academy of Management Review* highlighting workplace incivility. ^[1] Guinness (2008) defines civility as respect for differences and treating one another with dignity.^[2] Incivility as defined by Berger (2000) refers to any "speech or action that is disrespectful or rude"^[3] and produces an atmosphere of conflict and tension around the people which in turn leads to a negative environment. The absence of courtesy has become so common in today's generation that it often leads to incivility behavior^[4] not only in society but in all academic fields. Faculty members complain about the rise of uncivil behaviour in their students and differences are likely to influence how "phenomena are socially constructed" (Rousseau *et al.*, 2008) ^[5].

The act of incivility is seen not only in classrooms but also at various work sectors and among working colleagues creating threats of violence ^[6]. However, classroom incivility is increasing at an alarming rate and needs immediate attention. Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors which help in maintaining a positive teaching atmosphere for everyone around them. The presence of incivility has the greatest negative impact on learning around the people.^[5] The most practiced uncivil behaviours being lack of concentration in class, prolonged chattering, sleeping during class hours, using electronic devices while the class is conducted which hinders the learning atmosphere in the classroom. Such disruptive behaviour is bridging the gap between faculty members and students in all academic sectors across the country. Discussions about classroom behaviour focuses on the need to curb incivility because such behaviour harms the learning environment, weaken students' respect for their faculty and attachment to their institutions. Students in such

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disruptive learning environment may not attend class hours or even leave the university in extreme situations. Proper measures designed to increase communication with students can help minimize classroom incivility. Literature revealed that such studies regarding uncivil classroom behaviour among the dental colleges in India is very less ^[7] hence, this study was carried out in private dental colleges in the city of Davangere.

METHODOLOGY

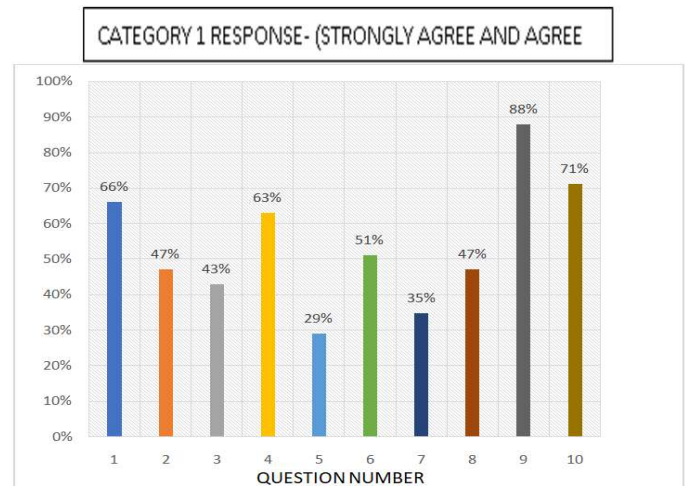
To investigate the present hypotheses, we surveyed accounting faculty members from across the city of Davangere, using random sampling method. To generate a standardized sample size of faculty from all ages groups as well as experience levels, we mailed the questionnaire individually to one professor, one associate professor, as well as one assistant professor in each of the departments. With confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 5%, the estimated sample size was a minimum of 66 subjects, and the validity of the questionnaire obtained was 0.8. A web – based survey was performed and the faculty members who gave their consent to participate in the study were included. The final sample size comprising of 80 faculty members from dental colleges in Davangere were included. A standardized self-administered questionnaire designed by Rowland and Srisukho^[9] included 10 questions was framed and Google forms were created. A link was sent to staff to participate in the survey through their whatsapp numbers and email ids. In particular, the questions raised in the study related to the prevalence of classroom activities that are considered distracting and that impair the attention of those in class. The pre-testing of the questions was carried out on the basis of the opinions expressed on the mean content validity ratio (CVR) of 0.81 between academicians and the Cronbach coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. Those who checked the validity ratio were not included in the survey. The form of the survey consisted of two parts the first being the demographic information of the participant and the second one comprising 10 questions on the non-civil conduct of the classroom, which was noted on the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 being strongly disagree to 5 being strongly agree. The data was evaluated using version 21 of the SPSS and Concise Statistics were used for survey.

Ethical Clearance: The present short study was approved by the institutional ethical committee of College Of Dental Sciences, Davangere Karnataka. review board. anonymity and confidentiality of all the respondents were maintained, and the participation was voluntary.

RESULTS

According to the results obtained 80 faculty members completed the survey form out of which 45 were male and 35 were female participants. The response obtained was categorised into 3 groups - 1-(strongly agreed and agreed), 2-(strongly disagreed and disagreed) and 3- (neutral). Chart 1 below shows the percentage response for each question who fall into category 1 of the study. Out of the 10 questions, six of them (1, 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10) were significantly perceived as uncivil behaviours by the faculty. Among them most frequently experienced ‘disruptive’ behaviours were prolonged chattering during the class (88%), using cell phones during class hours (71.1%), not paying attention in class (66%) and missing the

deadline of the assignments given to them (63%). Several faculty members also agreed that students sleep while the lectures are being conducted, are found cheating in exam hall and are reluctant to answer questions and interact in class. Very few felt that students challenge authority in class, demand special treatment and have “I paid for this institution” mentality (Table 1).



(Chart 1)

Table 1. Frequency of disruptive classroom behavior witnessed by the teachers

BEHAVIOUR	FREQUENCY
1.Not paying attention during class hours	66%
2.Reluctant to answer questions and interact in class	47.2%
3.Challenge authority in class	43%
4.Miss the deadline of the assignment	63%
5.Demand special treatment from faculty members	29%
6.Found cheating in exam hall	51%
7.‘I paid for the institution’ mentality	34.7%
8.Sleep during class hours	47.2%
9.Prolonged chattering during class hours	88%
10.Using cell phones and other electronic devices in class	71.1%

DISCUSSION

There is an outbreak of uncivil behaviour issues in dental education and demands immediate attention. UK sample results offer comparable details to those from the US (Hanson 2001; Clarke & Springer 2007) stating similar classroom incivility experienced by faculty members ^[2]. These behaviors include persistent chatting during class hours, using cell phones while teaching, increasing sleepers, reaching class late, cheating in the exam hall. These are commonly tagged as a “growing problem” ^[3] which disrupts the learning environment and leads to dishonesty and misconduct. The reasons behind such misconduct could be emotional immaturity, poor problem-solving skills, attention seeking, stress and redirected aggression. Survey also shows that males often exhibit a deep commanding voice like “professorial stereotype” ^[3] and if the faculty lacks such command may also lead to students getting engaged in uncivil behaviours. Many studies also reported that the level of incivility is found to be higher in larger classrooms in comparison with small classroom. Boice in 1996 stated students as “classroom terrorist”^[5] that develops tension in the environment. Paying attention in class is of utmost importance because it helps students to learn and process information. 66%

of the faculty agreed that students are distracted and 88% believed that prolonged chattering goes on in between class hours. It was interesting to find that some of the faculty members disagreed with this as the student might be under emotional stress, dealing with personal reasons, health issues or the student is unable to understand that particular topic and loses interest in class. The results obtained also show 71.1% of faculty agreed that students were found chatting on social media, playing online games, or disturbing the class by caller tones. Among all the reasons stated the emergence of technology is one of the most significant reason for classroom incivility in the modern-day university. The electronic devices promote distraction so easily that the incivility simply "looks different" than it did several years ago [3]. Faculty expect students to be attentive during class hours and be interested in the subject taught to them. These disruptive behaviours in turn lead to decreasing grades in exams; less energy spent in course related subjects, isolating themselves from others and eventually disappoints parents too. Thus uncivil behaviour has impact on the students, the institute as well as parents. Such uncivil behavior also contribute to faculty losing their enthusiasm in class, increasing stress, discontent and eventful burnout. Students should abide with the norms of their respective colleges and learn appropriate behaviours by observing faculty as their future role models. Faculty who feel are facing disruptive behaviour in their class should take necessary steps to improvise them than paying more attention on completing their syllabus on time. Developing active communication with students by knowing their names [5], encouraging the practice of good listening and personal skills, engaging them in interesting discussions, clarifying doubts on one to one basis, using open ended questions could be few strategies towards building a healthy environment. Engaging students in group discussions, organizing quizzes, use of pencil n paper asses students understanding [5], encouraging teamwork and praising them for their efforts could also help in promoting a harmonious environment of learning. Technological development and its easy accessibility along with student dependency over technology either for educational purposes or recreational purpose, have fueled its usage. Electronic devices should be encouraged for academic purposes only and norms should be made against its misuse. Faculty should accept genuine reasons of negligence by students on missing their deadlines of assignments so that they do not feel lost in the crowd. Survey studies showed that the percentage of cheating behaviours has doubled from 34% in 1969 to 68% in 1989 at the University of Georgia [8]. Therefore, greater awareness should be made on such incivility behaviours and measures should be taken to reduce the same.

Limitations of Study

- Sample size is less as only those willing to participate in the study were given the questionnaire.
- Perception of only staff is taken into account in the present study whereas perception of students is not been evaluated.

CONCLUSION

In the past few years, workplace negativity has grown tremendously and various studies have concluded how such behaviours have impact on the organization, among various groups and even at individual-level.[6]

The purpose of this survey was to draw the attention of the alarming problem of classroom incivility in dental colleges and to throw light on the measures that can be taken to reduce tension and support students academically. If incivility is ignored and failure to 'control' such behaviour continues, [2] it compromises on the most important aspect of learning and building harmonious environment which not only harms the students but also the faculty members. Surveys done on student perception regarding uncivil classroom behaviour also concluded that continuous talking in class hours, allowing cell phone usage during lectures are the highest uncivil behaviours on the rating list. [10] Thus faculty who are aware of such risks can be proactive in mitigating potential classroom disruptions by students. Appropriate measures can be taken, leading to a path of cooperation, civil behaviour and peaceful learning atmosphere. The faculty-student relationship should be given importance in near future and dental educators should take responsibility for same. This study is an attempt to overview the field which is neglected and less accessible and we hope it acts as an eye opener and provide a pathway for future, thus decreasing the act of incivility as witnessed by faculty members.

Financial support and sponsorship- Nil.

Conflicts of interest- There are no conflicts of interest.

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