



Research Article

PERCEPTIONS OF UNCIVIL BEHAVIOUR IN CLASSROOM AND CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT IN A DENTAL COLLEGE

¹Aditya Shetty, ^{2,*}Anish Kumar Lagiseti, ³Raksha Bhat, ⁴Mithra. N. Hegde, ⁵Priyadarshini Hegde and ⁶Chitharanjan Shetty

¹Additional Professor, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A. B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Deralakatte, Mangalore, Karnataka-575018

²Post Graduate Student, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A.B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Mangaluru, Karnataka-575018

³Lecturer, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A.B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Mangalore, Karnataka-575018

⁴Vice Principal, Professor and Head of the Department, Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics A. B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Deralakatte, Mangalore, Karnataka-575018

⁵Senior Professor, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A. B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Deralakatte, Mangalore, Karnataka-575018

⁶Lecturer, Department of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A. B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Deralakatte, Mangalore, Karnataka-575018

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 18th February 2016
Received in revised form
27th March 2016
Accepted 10th April 2016
Published online 30th May 2016

Keywords:

Uncivil,
Student Behaviour,
Challenging Behaviour.

ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of the present study was to evaluate the differences in perceptions of uncivil student behaviour by students in different years of study and staff members from various departments in a dental college.

Materials and Methods: A survey was conducted in a dental college, Mangaluru, and Karnataka. A total of 175 students and 25 faculty members participated in the study. A questionnaire comprising of various questions on uncivil student behaviour in the classroom, college and clinical environments were given and all the participants were asked to answer each question with a response (Yes/No). The data was subjected to statistical analysis.

Results: The obtained responses from the students were similar to the faculty response whereas the behaviour of the students considered civil by the students was considered as uncivil by the faculty. In faculty response, statistically significant differences were found for using a cellphone in class, attending late to class, being unprepared to class as uncivil classroom behaviours. In student's response, statistically significant differences were seen with reluctant to answer, making offensive gestures, arriving late to class, challenging in class as uncivil behaviours. The present study also showed statistically significant differences in gender among students.

Conclusion: The present study concluded that uncivil student behaviour varies with the age, gender and cultural background of the students. The common cause of incivility is stressful situations in the college and clinics. By observing what students perceive as civil and uncivil faculty can take prior measures to reduce challenging behaviour by students. It is always acceptable to consider views of both faculty and student opinions on Uncivil behaviour

Copyright © 2016, Sachin Kumar et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

INTRODUCTION

Uncivil behaviour in the classroom, clinical and college environment is one of the frequent issues in every college (Michael *et al.*, 2009). It is said that civility is the cornerstone of professionalism (Richard *et al.*, 2015).

**Corresponding author: Anish Kumar Lagiseti, Post Graduate Student, Dept. of Conservative Dentistry and Endodontics, A.B. Shetty Memorial Institute of Dental Sciences, Mangaluru, Karnataka-575018.*

As professionals, we expect students to demonstrate professional behaviour. Student misbehaviours not only affect the flow and effective teaching process but also affects the concentration and the learning process of the students. Professors mostly complain that misbehaviour in the classroom is intolerable (Johnson and Fullwood, 2006) and stressful (Lewis, 1999) It takes a great amount of time and energy to manage a class with uncivil behaviour. Managing uncivil behaviour in a classroom is a difficult task encountered by

many faculties today. To reduce the adverse effects of student Misbehaviours, the primary goal is to identify various misbehaviours inside the classroom as well as other studying environments which are considered as stressful for the students. (Rachel *et al.*, 2012) Other than considering student perceptions on misbehaviour it is always important to consider the opinions of the faculty towards various uncivil student behaviour, as the perceptions of the faculty towards uncivil behaviour changes from student to student based on student attitudes. Before understanding about perceptions of various uncivil student behaviours, it is important to consider how faculty perceive uncivility. A behaviour might be challenging to one faculty member might not be challenging to another. A particular behaviour is viewed as problematic may not necessarily be rule breaking. (Boice, 1996; Bruce, 2000) Berger in his paper stated incivility as "destructive and disruptive "to the learning process.

The terms "incivility" and "uncivil behaviour" have been defined in different ways by different Authors. Feldman defines classroom incivility as "any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom." (Feldman, 2001) Morrisette defines incivility as "intentional behaviour of students to disrupt the teaching/learning process of others. (Morrisette, 2001) Speech or action indicative of rudeness or lack of respect for those to whom such behaviour is directed. (Richard, 1999) A disruptive behaviour referred to "an activity that causes distress for teachers, interrupts the learning process and that leads teachers to make continual comments to the student. (Rachel *et al.*, 2012)

The aim of the present study was to evaluate the differences in perceptions of uncivil student behaviour in the classroom and clinical environments in a dental college. The main objectives of the present study were to categorise various uncivil student behaviours as perceived by faculty in a dental college and make a questionnaire, to identify most common uncivil student behaviour in classroom, clinics and college environment as perceived by students and faculty, to identify the perceptions of different uncivil student behaviours by students and faculty members, students in different years of study, male and female students and faculty members.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The questionnaire used in this survey was partially based on the study by Ballard (Richard *et al.*, 2015). We used a self-administered pen and paper survey research was designed to get opinions on various uncivil behaviours. This design eliminated technical difficulties in cases of an online survey. A total of 175 students and 25 faculty members participated in the survey from a dental college in Manguluru, Karnataka, India. After discussing with the faculty about various uncivil student behaviours in dental college a final questionnaire containing 36 questions was prepared with an extra question "Is there any other behaviour not listed above that you consider uncivil classroom behaviour? For the faculty alone to respond. The questionnaire was divided into 3 categories based on uncivil behaviour in various places in a dental college, uncivil behaviour in clinics, uncivil behaviour in the classroom and uncivil behaviour in college premises. All the questions are listed in Table 1.

A total of 175 students participated in the study which includes II, III, IV, and Intern dental students and dental postgraduate students. 35 students have randomly selected from each year the questionnaire and the answering method of the questionnaire was explained to the students. Students were asked to answer all the questions with a response of either yes or no. Twenty-five faculty members participated in the study from various departments. They were given the same survey forms that were given to the students and asked them to respond Yes or No.

RESULTS

All the obtained responses were transferred to Excel sheet and subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS software 16.0 (statistical package for social sciences). The chi-square test or Fisher's exact test (when cell counts included less than five responses) was performed to test for significant differences in responses according to gender for both faculty and student responses. Further, Fisher's exact test was used to test for statistically significant differences in responses between faculty and students. The same statistical method was used to test for significant differences in responses of students in various years of study. The level of significance P-value was set at $P=0.05$ as it involved multiple testing. According to faculty responses statistically significant differences were found in being unprepared to the class ($P=0.006$) as uncivil classroom behaviour. Whereas using a cell phone at clinics ($P=0.095$), eating and drinking at clinics, challenging authority at clinics ($P=0.06$), arriving late to clinics as uncivil behaviour at clinics and missing deadlines, attending with improper grooming, asking deadline extensions as uncivil behaviour in the college environment. 100% agreement was seen with faculty in using a cell phone in class and attending late to class as uncivil behaviour. Whereas student responses showed high acceptance for arriving late to class and being unprepared for clinics as uncivil behaviour. (Table-2)

According to student responses statistically significant differences were seen according to gender. Out of 175 students 106 (60.5%) were females and 69 (39.5%) were males. Female student members considered the following attributes uncivil; challenging in class ($p=0.095$), arriving late to class ($P=0.06$) and making offensive remarks/gestures in college ($P=0.006$). Whereas male student members considered using a cell phone in clinics ($P=0.082$) as *not* uncivil behaviour. Over 59% of male students agreed reluctant to answer as uncivil behaviour whereas only 38% of female students agreed as uncivil. All female students agreed to make offensive gestures as uncivil behaviour whereas only 77% of male students agreed on it as uncivil behaviour. According to the response from II year students statistically significant differences were seen with missing deadlines ($P=0.0062$), unprepared at clinics ($P=0.067$), eating at clinics ($P=0.09$), attending late to class ($P=0.057$) and leaving class early as uncivil behaviour ($P=0.05$).

According to the response from III year students statistically significant differences were seen with not attentive in class ($P=0.078$) and Attending with improper grooming ($P=0.072$) as uncivil behaviours. According to the response from IV year students statistically significant differences are seen in Eating at clinics ($P=0.05$) and missing deadlines ($P=0.089$) as uncivil behaviours.

Table 1. Categories of type of uncivil behaviour for 36 survey items

classroom	clinic	college
Using cell phone/texting in class	Using cell phone	Demanding special treatment
Drinking in class	Eating in clinic	Demonstrating an "I paid for this" mentality
Eating in class	Drinking in clinic	Making offensive remarks /gestures
Challenging authority in class	Challenging authority in clinic	Missing deadlines
Leaving class early	Leaving clinic early	Asking for deadline extension
Being unprepared for class	Being unprepared for clinic	Talking out of turn
Chattering in class	Reading newspaper/magazine	Challenging the instructors knowledge
Reading newspaper/magazine	Arriving late to clinic	Challenging instructors credibility
Sleeping in class	Using computer in clinic to surf the web	Attending with improper grooming
Arriving late to class	Littering the clinical area	
Not paying attention	Attending without neat apron	
Reluctance to answer questions		
Using computer to surf web		
Cheating		
Leaving classroom without taking permission for any reason		

Table 2. Varied perceptions of students and faculty in various uncivil behaviours

UNCIVIL BEHAVIOUR	STUDENT RESPONSE	FACULTY RESPONSE
Using cell phone in class	156(89%)	25(100%)
Attending late to class	170(97%)	25(100%)
Being unprepared to class	163(93%)	20(80%)
Using cell phone in the clinics	85(48.5%)	14(56%)
Eating in clinics	96(54.8%)	16(64%)
Drinking in clinics	56(32%)	10(40%)
Arriving late to clinics	156(89%)	20(80%)
Being unprepared for clinics	170(97%)	24(96%)
Missing deadlines	159(90.8%)	23(92%)
Asking deadline extensions	166(94.8%)	20(80%)
Attending with improper grooming	152(86.8%)	21(84%)

According to the response from intern students statistically significant differences were seen in attending with improper grooming as uncivil behaviour ($P=0.05$). According to response of Postgraduate student statistically significant differences were seen with sleeping in class ($P=0.005$), being unprepared for class ($P=0.002$), Leaving Clinic early ($P=0.007$), missing deadlines ($P=0.002$), dominating a discussion ($P=0.002$) and Asking deadline extensions ($P=0.006$) as uncivil behaviours.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to know the attitude of students towards uncivil behaviour in the classroom, clinical and college environments and faculty opinion on uncivil student behaviour. As the academic years progress the students exposed to the stressful clinical environment which might lead to uncivil behaviour hence our survey form was included with a category of uncivil behaviour at clinics. In the present survey, there were few similarities in faculty and student responses. The majority of students and faculty agreed that using a cell phone in class, arriving late to class, making offensive gestures, improper grooming, attending without neat aprons as uncivil behaviour. As the students pass and go to next academic year the attitude towards uncivil behaviour changes this might be because of the change in the curriculum, classroom atmosphere and faculty.

Male students in the present study showed more consideration to uncivil behaviour in clinics than females whereas female students in the present study showed more consideration to uncivil behaviour in college. Female faculty members in the present study showed more consideration to classroom behaviour as uncivil. The response rate for present study was high as the objectives of the study were explained prior and answering the survey form was explained to all the students and faculty participating the study. Hence, the biased results due to non-response were eliminated.

Hovland *et al* found no statistically significant differences in between non-respondents and respondents in his survey (Hovland *et al.*, 1980) Faculty showed full agreement in using a cell phone in the class room, attending late to class as most common uncivil behaviours which are intolerant. But only 90% of students agreed using a cell phone in class as uncivil behaviour and 83.5% of students agreed attending late to class as uncivil behaviour. As the academic years progress the students consider clinical behaviours as uncivil than classroom and college which may be because of increased working hours in clinics than in classroom and college environments and also more stressful conditions in the clinics. The uncivil behaviour changes with gender, race and ethnicity of the students (Alexander-Snow, 2004).

According to Boice, high levels of classroom incivilities were seen in students with reduced levels of attentiveness and taking notes during class and reduced levels of teacher interest towards class, reduced clarity in explaining concepts and less immediate in reacting to misbehaviours. One of the main causes of incivilities in the classroom is with teachers who are less competent and less immediate in their behaviours (Boice, 1996). According to Morrisette students with personal problems, increased anxiety levels, and emotional disturbances are more likely to exhibit uncivil classroom behavior (Morrisette, 2001). Many studies in the literature showed that professors who show care and interest in students and take an interest in students learning process are more likely to develop strong positive relationships with their students and so they will be able to manage challenging behaviours in their classrooms. The literature also suggested that it is important, that teachers recognise student's perceptions of uncivil behaviour and reflects on their own personal beliefs and the beliefs of others regarding the understanding of challenging behaviours. Morrisette gave six methods to help faculty in reducing student incivility: 1) develop effective communication and interpersonal skills to better understand the student perspective; 2) set academic and behavioural expectations by clearly spelling out course objectives and evaluation methods; 3) arrange for midterm teaching feedback to and from students; 4) establish a collaborative learning environment and classroom experience; 5) reframe potential conflicts by responding respectfully, rather than harshly, to students; and 6) establish a student grievance process in which student concerns are prioritized and investigated immediately (Morrisette, 2001).

Conclusion

Present study showed significant differences in perceptions of uncivil behaviour between students and faculty. There were no statistically significant differences in gender among faculty but significant differences were seen with gender among students. Significant differences were also seen in the students of various years. Present study showed that as the academic years progress, the perceptions of uncivil behaviour in students was changed. Uncivil student behaviour in the classroom and clinical environment depends on gender and cultural background (age, race, ethnicity and social class) of the student. Before understanding about perceptions of various uncivil student behaviours student behaviours, it is important to consider how faculty perceive uncivility. A behaviour might be challenging to one faculty member might not be challenging to another.

So it is always important to consider the ethnicity of students, socio-economic background, explore the reasons for uncivil behaviour by students and then to act accordingly for reduction of the uncivil behaviour. By considering what students perceive as civil and uncivil faculty can take prior measures to reduce challenging behaviour by students. It is always acceptable to consider views of both student and faculty perceptions towards uncivil behaviour.

REFERENCES

- Alexander-Snow, M. 2004. Dynamics of gender, ethnicity, and race in understanding classroom incivility. *New Directions Teaching Learning*; 99:21–31.
- Boice, B. 1996. Classroom incivilities. *Res Higher Educ*;37(4):453–86.
- Bruce. A. Breger. 2000. Incivility. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*; Vol. 64:445-450.
- Feldman, L.J. 2001. Classroom civility is another of our instructor responsibilities. *Coll Teaching*;49(4):137–40.
- Hovland, E.J., Romberg, E., Moreland, E.F. 1980. Nonresponse bias to mail survey questionnaires within a professional population. *J Dent Educ*; 270-4.
- Johnson, H. L. and Fullwood. H. L. 2006. Disturbing behaviours in the secondary classroom: how do general educators perceive problem behaviours. *Journal of Instructional Psychology*; vol.33(1): 20–39.
- Lewis. R. 1999. Teachers coping with the stress of classroom discipline. *Social Psychology of Education*; vol. 3(3): 155–171.
- Michael, L. 2009. Rowland and Konokraj Srishuko. Dental Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Incivility in the Classroom. *Journal of Dental Education*; vol73 (1):119-126.
- Morrisette, P.J. 2001. Reducing incivility in the university college classroom. *Int Electronic J Leadership Learning*; 5(4):1–12.
- Rachel C. F. Sun and Daniel T. L. Shek. 2012. Student Classroom Misbehaviour: An Exploratory Study Based on Teachers' Perceptions. *The ScientificWorld Journal*. vol1 (1):1-8.
- Richard, G. 2002. Tiberius and Edred Flak. Incivility in dyadic teaching and learning. *New directions for teaching and learning*; vol 1999(77):3-12.
- Richard, W., Ballard, Joseph L., Hagan, Janice A. Townsend, Mary B. Ballard, Paul C. Armbruster. 2015. Perceptions of Uncivil Student Behaviour in Dental Education. *J Dent Edu*; 79(1): 38-45.
