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UNDERGRADUATE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY FROM THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

by

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## ABSTRACT

### UNDERGRADUATE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY FROM THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

Erin M. Bunton  
Old Dominion University, 2021  
Director: Dr. Alan M. Schwitzer

Classroom disruption, more recently referred to as civility, changes the in-person classroom experience. This study investigated the impact of gender, race, age, and teaching experience on faculty perceptions of classroom incivility.

Faculty at a large, public institution in the Southeastern United States participated in the research for this study. Hierarchical multiple regression was used to understand the relationship between the demographic variables of the participants and their perception of classroom incivility.

Study findings yielded significant results, with positive relationships between the demographic variables and perception of classroom incivility. Limitations and implications for future research are discussed.

*Keywords:* incivility, gender, race, teaching experience, age.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The researcher begins by introducing the topic of classroom incivility and how it will be defined throughout the study. An overview of research related to classroom incivility and its importance is shared, as well as research questions and goals of the study.

#### **Overview**

Classroom disruption, more recently referred to as incivility, has been shown to negatively impact student learning and persistence (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004; Seidman, 2005; Caza & Cortina, 2007). Faculty report that incivility negatively impacts their wellness and can cause a change in teaching style (Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009). Classroom professors may report feeling uneasy about disruption that could lead to dangerous behavior, with thoughts of gun violence based on what is reported in the news (Van Brunt & Lewis, 2014). “Institutions where faculty create an environment that emphasizes effective educational practices have students who are active participants in their learning and perceive greater gains from their undergraduate experience” (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005). Classroom incivility negatively impacts professors and students, but both parties have minimal consensus when it comes to perceptions of what is disruptive to the learning environment (Baker, Lusk, & Neuhauser, 2012; Boice, 1996).

Gender and race are significant in faculty perception of classroom disruption. Female faculty report more incidents of disrespectful behavior, such as being called Mrs. Instead of Dr. (Kelly & Stanley, 1999). In Chavez Rudolph’s (2005) study, it was found that gender and race were statistically significant contributors to classroom incivility. Age was also a significant moderator in the same study. Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010) found that similarly, women,

international, and non-white faculty encounter more incivility than other groups, including hostile behavior. Though the institution they studied employed more men than women, more women completed the incivility survey distributed in a study by Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2014). With a third of women cyberbullied by students saying they considered leaving their jobs, the study showed gendered difference was a significant finding (Cassidy, Faucher & Jackson, 2014).

Boice (1996) conducted a longitudinal study, and separated faculty participants into groups of novice or experienced faculty, and found that experience did make a difference in experiencing classroom incivility. Boice also found that teaching skills could mitigate incivility, and novice faculty who were deficient in skills experienced even higher levels of incivility (1996).

### **Background**

This study sought to expand upon previous research by asking whether faculty age or classroom teaching experience impacts faculty perception of classroom incivility. An electronic questionnaire was sent via email to faculty using a modified version of the “Survey on Academic Incivility” (Center for Survey Research, 2000). The site of the research is a large, public institution in the southeast. Survey questions ask whether faculty consider specific behavior, such as chewing gum or arriving to class late, uncivil behavior.

Participants were a stratified random sample of instructional faculty teaching an in-person class during the Fall 2019 semester. Participants included a diverse sample of adjunct and full-time faculty of all ages and experience levels.

### **Limitations**

The single institution research limits the ability to generalize the study to a larger population. Limiting participants to those teaching in-person classes also restricts the possibility of obtaining information related to distance learning courses. By asking more general questions about whether specific behaviors are uncivil without restricting them to a time period, the data could be less reliable than if the questions were more specific, such as within the past semester or year. College teaching experience is also broad and may miss other types of experience useful to survey participants.

Data as analyzed using hierarchical multiple regression. A more detailed approach to the research design proposed for the study can be found in Chapter Three.

### **Research Questions**

1. Is there a relationship between faculty age and perception of classroom incivility?
  - a. When controlling for gender, is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?
  - b. When controlling for race, is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?
  - c. When controlling for gender and race, Is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?
2. Is there a relationship between faculty teaching experience and perception of classroom incivility?
  - a. When controlling for gender, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?
  - b. When controlling for race, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?

- c. When controlling for gender and race, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?

### **Conclusion**

The goal of this study is to contribute to existing research related to classroom incivility by investigating whether age or teaching experience are significant contributors to faculty perception of classroom incivility in undergraduate classrooms.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the researcher summarizes research related to classroom incivility and the research questions. First, the theoretical foundation of the study will be described. The research is then divided into the following subtopics to describe the research: gender identity, racial identity, teaching strategies, perception of incivility, impact of incivility, explanations for classroom incivility, and experimental research.

#### **Theoretical Foundation**

Prior to Boice's (1996) comprehensive, longitudinal study, the researcher found no empirical research conducted on the topic of classroom disruption or incivility, though other publications acknowledged it as an issue and provided advice for curbing it in the classroom. Boice observed large survey courses in the first and last 20 minutes, met with the faculty weekly, and interviewed students after each observed class period for questioning. Student and faculty perceptions were included in the study. Both groups identify the other as the source of classroom incivility (CI). The results showed whether the experience and/or enthusiasm of the teacher, timing of semester, or teacher behavior in the classroom impacted incivility.

Of the faculty who participated, Boice (1996) grouped them as either novice or experienced and as good or deficient based on information found in classroom evaluations and colleague referrals. While novice faculty generally did not have more classroom incivility, those novice faculty deemed deficient did experience it more often, "typically for entire semesters at chronic but moderate, disheartening levels" (p. 469). Experience made a difference in classroom incivility, but not as significantly as motivators and immediacy, teaching skills predicted by Plax

and Kearney (1992), as cited in Boice (1996). Motivators and immediacy are described in further detail, using CI to mean classroom incivility:

With positive motivators and, particularly, immediacy, student inclinations to CI drop off dramatically. But without these skills, teachers are seen as cold, uncaring, and incompetent by their students - as deserving targets of incivilities. So, according to Kearney and Plax, power in classrooms is relational. Teachers have the power (if they have the skills) to use motivators and immediacies to moderate CI. And students have the power and the skills (far more than most teachers appreciate) to effectively undermine teachers who seem not to care about them (Boice, 1996, p. 458).

The research that followed Boice's study is sorted by theme in this chapter. Most of the research shared a focus on gender and is shared first. Although gender is one of the primary findings, other findings that may cross over into other themes are noted. Racial or ethnic identity is also a topic studied by researchers, which sometimes includes country of origin. Other themes include teaching strategies, perception of incivility, impact of incivility, explanations for classroom incivility, and experimental research.

### **Gender Identity**

Fassinger (1995) set out to add depth to the existing literature by adding peers to the study of classroom interaction. Class traits, student characteristics, student perception of self, student perception of peers, and student perception of the professor were the independent variables with class participation as the dependent variable. Results showed a gendered difference in how students perceive their contributions to the class. When looking at the impact of faculty gender, female students showed significant increases in confidence, comprehension, interest in the subject and participation with female faculty, while the only significant result with male students was better comprehension from female faculty. Males and females viewed faculty similarly at the institution surveyed, but the only significant results of students' perception of faculty by gender were attributed to female faculty. Student traits and class variables account for

37% of the variance in class participation. These results maintained their significance whether separated by student gender or combined. Though professor demographics were collected in the Fassinger (1995) study, age and tenure status would have comprised the confidentiality of participants.

Kelly and Stanley (1999) developed a questionnaire with some open-ended questions and Likert style answers, with class workload and policies and classroom environment as the two major themes. When it comes to statistically significant gender differences, female faculty reported more complaints about class workload and a higher likelihood of being addressed incorrectly (Mrs. Instead of Dr.). The study showed many more similarities between men and women's experience with student behavior.

Caboni, Hirschy, and Best (2004) asked whether specific group membership influences classroom behavior. Using the two categories of disruption from Boice (1996), the authors found normative support for sanctioning insolent inattention, but not disrespectful disruption. Similar to other studies, male students surveyed viewed both types of classroom incivility as less inappropriate than female students. Social fraternity members viewed incivility as significantly less inappropriate than social sorority members or unaffiliated students.

Montgomery, Kane and Vance (2004) showed study participants 18 video clips from the Anita Hill Senate Judiciary Committee hearing in October 1991. After watching the clips, participants ranked whether the line of questioning was appropriate to ask Ms. Hill, using a Likert-type scale. Sex, race, age, and education were collected at the end, but no significant differences were shown for age or education. Using MANCOVA analysis, results show that sex was a significant predictor of ratings, with females giving higher levels of inappropriateness for

every segment. However, race was not significant, including for female African American participants who shared characteristics with Anita Hill (Montgomery, Kane & Vance, 2004).

Alexander-Snow (2004) used existing literature to expand the discussion of gender, ethnicity, and race, and how they influence classroom civility in her analysis. The author concluded that perceptions of culture require additional strategies for improving classroom behavior, suggesting Boice's 1996 recommendation of immediacy falls short, particularly for female faculty and faculty of color.

Chavez Rudolph's (2005) dissertation studying faculty perspectives of student incivility showed that age was a significant moderator and was used as a control in several parts of the study. Faculty of color and white faculty responded differently, as did men and women, creating four groups (male faculty of color, female faculty of color, white male faculty, white female faculty). The only group with significance between age and ambiguous behavior "(behaviors that are ambiguous in regards to whether the uncivil behavior is directed toward the instructor)" (p. iv) was female faculty of color. When faculty were asked what they believed contributed most to student incivility, they said today's educational environment was to blame. However, older faculty were less likely to attribute student incivility to education today, implying younger instructors may attribute student incivility to education today. Instructor behaviors were the second highest selected reason for student incivility. Gender and ethnicity were statistically significant as the researcher examined student bias. Women and faculty of color were more likely to attribute student incivility to student bias. The only group that did not attribute student incivility to bias was the white male faculty. When considering how student incivility impacts faculty, faculty were more likely to experience feelings such as disappointment or anger than feelings directed inward or feelings of intimidation.



Alexander, Mundrake, and Brown (2009) sought to determine whether there were differences in high school and college perception of classroom behavior in pre-business majors, and whether there were differences in behavior based on gender. Eleven out of fifteen items that addressed high school vs. college were significantly different. This was the same across genders with one difference, which is that female students saw more people reading off-topic materials in high school. Females responded that behaviors were unacceptable more often than males.

A study by Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010) focused on newer Geography faculty without tenure, identified from the membership list of the Association of American Geographers and web searches. The study was mostly qualitative and showed women, international instructors, and non-white instructors encountered more hostility than other groups. Participants employed at public institutions, research institutions, and who taught large classes experienced more incivilities than their counterparts. Respondents reported asking for a grade change or an extension were examples provided.

Cassidy, Faucher and Jackson (2014) reported results of one type of university cyberbullying from the perspective of faculty. The online survey was distributed at one institution and reported the responses of 121 participants. More females completed the survey than males, although this institution had less female faculty. Gendered difference was a significant finding. One third of cyberbullied women said the messages they received made them want to quit. A majority expressed some level of concern about cyberbullying, but 25% more women were concerned than men. 17% of faculty said they were cyberbullied by students or faculty in the past year (Cassidy, Faucher & Jackson, 2014).

In their study, Chui and Dietz (2014) used vignettes and a video to examine when participants would intervene in a situation that involves verbal incivility toward a female

colleague. Their hypothesis was that intervention is more likely when the target of incivility appears hurt by the statement(s) and intervention is less likely in an incident where a personal relationship with the involved parties is assumed. Each hypothesis was supported by the data. A third hypothesis, that observers who have experienced discrimination are less motivated to intervene, was not proven. Participants were consistent in identifying incivility, but not consistent about whether they should intervene. When participants noted harm to the woman in the scenario, they did not necessarily take action, which may have implications for classroom disruption incidents (Chui & Dietz, 2014).

### **Racial Identity**

In this case study, Monroe and Obidah (2004) focused on how cultural identity may impact a teacher's perception of classroom disruption. Instead of studying differences, this study wanted to explore the disciplinary practices of an instructor who is culturally synched with her eight grade science students. The two behaviors identified were patterns of cultural humor and demonstrations of affect and emotion. "Although Ms. Simpson heavily draws on her students' culture at times, it is noteworthy that she never minimizes or abdicates her power as the teacher to control the classroom" (p. 266). It is worth noting that the instructor in the case study attended the middle school where she now teaches, is involved in the school community, and has ten years of teaching experience. The article makes a logical argument for less traditional teaching and behavioral management in classrooms and more research in culturally responsive classroom management.

Hendrix (2007) addressed classroom incivility (CI) through the lens of a black, female professor, with focus on the offender of the same race as the instructor. Hendrix pointed out the intersectionality present for a black female professor. She is fighting gender and racial

stereotypes about competency in a male dominated field, while also denying black students breaks or favors that they expect from her based on shared race. Hendrix used literature to provide potential explanations for this behavior and provides advice for addressing it based on personal experience and conflict management.

### **Teaching Strategies**

Boice (1996) outlined common concerns and lack of research related to classroom incivility, sentiments still echoed in today's articles and calls for more research. Boice gave four reasons why the topic is understudied: embarrassment, it is more studied among teachers with less status, it is more acknowledged among doctoral level practitioners, and higher education's approach is decades behind other disciplines. Boice suggests it lacks a practical approach to be useful. He observed large survey courses in the first and last 20 minutes, met with the faculty weekly, and interviewed students after each observed class period for questioning. Student and faculty perceptions were shared. Both groups identified the other as the source of classroom incivility. The study measured whether incivility was impacted by the experience and/or enthusiasm of the teacher, timing of semester, and teacher behavior in the classroom. Teaching experience did make a difference in Boice's study, but it was because of the teacher's behavior's, such as immediacy and positive motivators that positively influenced classroom incivility. In classrooms where faculty showed enthusiasm, Boice said they also taught with immediacy, and experienced less classroom incivility. Classroom incivility stayed lower throughout the semester for faculty who talked casually with students outside of class and helped with direct preparation for tests through mini deadlines or practice exams (Boice, 1996).

Braxton, Bayer, and Noseworthy (2004) conducted a student survey to assess whether student's intellectual and academic development is impacted by whether the instructor follows

teaching norms such as a clear syllabus or grading based on merit. They found that faculty who did prepare for class by following the norms did negatively impact the intellectual and academic development of students.

Choice theory, policy analysis, and immediacy are constructs McKinne and Martin (2008) chose to frame classroom disruption. Based on their research, the authors deduced that students make choices about their behavior in an effort to gain control from instructors, if they don't feel respected. They concluded that more policy related to classroom civility is needed. The researchers surveyed tenured faculty and undergraduate students to learn their perceptions of classroom incivility, teaching effectiveness, and policy effectiveness. The study used a quantitative, online survey, then a second quantitative survey sent after the results of the first survey were analyzed.

Austin and Soeda (2008) examined a strategy (noncontingent reinforcement, or NCR) to reduce off-task behavior that is typically used in classroom for people with developmental disabilities. They trained students to observe two misbehaving boys in the classroom setting – one with developmental disabilities and one without. The NCR intervention sustained on-task behavior for both boys.

Black, Wygonik, and Frey (2011) studied frequency of classroom disruption and strategies for classroom management. The instrument, called “Promoting a Positive Classroom Environment,” was developed based on literature reviews and tested by 35 faculty before being completed by 228 faculty for the study. The study, conducted at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, described as a mid-sized state university, reported mostly frequencies, but found that when faculty training on managing disruption went up, frequency of disruption went down.

Gender differences in perception were also shown in the mostly qualitative data (Black, Wygonik, & Frey, 2011).

Participants in Dhaem's (2012) study were in a 12-month teacher training program. They received four hours of behavioral training that emphasized giving cues instead of punishments. All participants said the techniques they learned impacted behavior, and 79% said they used what they learned in the class. The training also positively impacted instructor confidence and feelings of control (Dhaem, 2012).

Using an online survey of classroom disruption vignettes, Boysen (2012) sought to create empirical evidence of effective teacher responses according to students. By including some items to determine whether the participant was paying attention, 19 surveys were removed. Since the sample was not random and students were offered partial course credit, this was one way to add reliability to the study. Students rated direct confrontation and private confrontation as the most effective ways for teachers to handle classroom incivility (Boysen, 2012).

Cooper (2014) studied high school student engagement and whether it was impacted by three teaching methods: connective instruction, academic rigor, and lively teaching. After administering a survey to students, the author conducted case studies in five classrooms. Cooper (2014) found significant correlations among the three teaching methods and the twelve behaviors used to describe those methods. Academic rigor and lively teaching were not as connected to engagement as connective instruction (Cooper, 2014).

### **Perception of Incivility**

Feldmann (2001) focused on the role of instructor to decrease classroom incivility. Feldmann indicated that he believed classroom incivility stems from society's increasing incivility. Four categories are used to describe the incivility: annoyances, terrorism, intimidation,

and violence (including threats). Feldmann (2001) concludes that incivility should be addressed out of an ethical obligation to student learning and to protect the instructor from harm. The article does not include research, but a summary of other resources and practical suggestions for the instructor.

A study by Rowland and Srisukho (2009) uses part of an instrument from a pharmacy study to determine faculty and student similarities/differences related to uncivil classroom behavior. The survey participants were faculty and students at a Midwestern dental school. Male students were less likely to see behavior as uncivil than female students. Of the 18 questions both faculty and students were asked, only 7 had similar responses, showing the difference in perception of what behavior is acceptable in class by gender.

A study by Swinney, Elder, and Seaton (2010) compared accounting faculty's definition of incivility and its occurrence as compared to definitions offered by multidisciplinary faculty. It also compares the perceptions of incivility of accounting faculty with administrators to explore whether administrators are aware of what is happening in the classroom. Accounting faculty rated student behavior as more disruptive than the multidisciplinary faculty. When defining incivility, the data show no significant difference between faculty and administrators (Swinney, Elder, & Seaton, 2010).

Extending the work of Parr and Valerius (1999), Landrum (2011) surveyed a random sample of members of the American Psychological Association. Participants were mailed a survey of most appropriate behaviors and their frequency. About half of each of the results overlapped with Parr and Valerius (1999) findings. Landrum combined the rankings to create high frequency high appropriate and low frequency low appropriate scores and suggested that low appropriate high frequency behavior may contribute to classroom incivility.

Hollis (2012) described the results of a cyberbullying survey of 121 faculty and teaching personnel at a Canadian University. Far more women took the survey, and only women volunteered for a follow-up interview. More women than men responded that cyberbullying should be prevented and believed it is important to educate on communication. Women also reported greater impact than men in the survey. The list of ways cyberbullying impacts the teachers is similar to how disruption impacts them. The literature review also reviewed K-12 and workplace bullying.).

A three-subject phenomenological study conducted by Sedivy-Benton, Strohschen, Cavazos, and Boden-McGill (2014) showcased the impact of bullying on the educators interviewed and highlighted the need for administration to recognize and stop bullying.

One of the most relevant parts of this book by Van Brunt and Lewis (2014) for the purpose of this topic is the introduction, which ties faculty concerns about disruption to some of the major acts of violence on college campuses, such as shootings. While this book offers advice and a wealth of scenarios, it shares little research backing the claims made within. While the authors are experienced professionals, the information in the book is best suited for a faculty member or member of a behavior intervention team. The information and advice are anecdotal.

A study by Suarez-Orozco, Casanova, Martin, Katsiaficas, Cuellar, Smith & Dias, (2015). consisted of three phases which included ethnography, structured observation, focus groups, surveys, and interviews. The findings from phase one, and the focus of this article, is adding the existing research with different populations. The number of microaggressions observed more than doubled in remedial classrooms compared to general education, though results were not statistically significant. The most frequent type of MA was related to intelligence, with race, gender, and intersectionality also making the list. Instructors were the most frequent people to

use MAs. When students used them, they did so toward another student, but not toward the professor.

Foulk, Woolum, and Erez (2016) claimed research shows that “rudeness is a large and growing problem” (p. 51) and set out to explore the frequency and contagion. They hypothesize that rudeness can be spread to third parties who do not experience the initial act of rudeness, and draw parallels to the flu virus. The results of three studies showed that low intensity behaviors have negative impact, responses to rude behavior are sometimes involuntary responses, and rudeness can spread throughout an environment. Their findings were that rudeness can be curtailed through an intervention. Though the article uses workplace as an example, the study was conducted with graduate students (Foulk, Woolum, & Erez, 2016).

Participants in Alt and Itzkovich’s (2015) research come from institutions in Israel and Galilee. The hypothesis that students’ belief in a just world predicts the perception of the teacher’s just behavior, which impacts how students perceive faculty incivility was correct. The findings include the result that when students believe their faculty member treats them fairly, they report less classroom incivility.

In a study conducted by Bjorklund and Rehling (2009), students from a Midwestern public University were surveyed online were asked to rate how uncivil 25 specific behaviors are, and how often they see the behaviors. The most severe uncivil behaviors, such as coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs, occurred the least often. The mid-level incivilities, such as text messaging or fidgeting that distracts others, occurred more often (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2009).

Hard, Conway, and Moran (2006) focused on the differences in student and faculty beliefs about academic misconduct. The authors make it clear that faculty have the ability to



guide expectations and reaction to academic misconduct. The quantitative study was conducted at a mid-sized public institution in the Northeast. Participants were undergraduate students and faculty. Most students (90.1%) said they had engaged in academic misconduct at least once, but the frequency of the behavior was self-reported as low/infrequent. Beliefs about misconduct were higher than reported misconduct, meaning faculty perceived misconduct was occurring more than students self-reported it was occurring. The findings of the research surmised that "most misconduct is going undetected or unchallenged" (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006, p. 1073) and faculty also believe misconduct occurs more frequently than what students report, although students thought it to be more common than faculty. This study showed that knowledge of policy was positively correlated with taking action against misconduct. The authors point out that social norming could be useful, as studies have shown social norming with peer drinking to be useful on some campuses (Hard, Conway, & Moran, 2006).

A recent quantitative study of nursing faculty conducted by Ziefle (2018) showed that there was a generational difference in the perception of classroom incivility between Generation X and Baby Boomer faculty. Faculty were given specific behaviors and asked to rank the disruptiveness of those behaviors and the younger generation (Generation X) reported more student behaviors as always disruptive and said they experienced more threatening student behavior. The instrument used in the study also asked about incivility from other faculty and both groups reported similar incivility from other faculty members (Ziefle, 2018).

### **Impact of Classroom Incivility**

In a study conducted by Braxton and Jones (2008), first year students from eight religiously affiliated colleges completed a survey about two incivility types: insolent inattention and disrespectful disruption. Both types lowered communal potential, defined initially in

Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon, 2004, who based their work on the Boice (1996) article. Communal potential is when a student perceives potential for community and gets involved on campus, which leads to what the authors call “social integration” (p.426). Social integration inspires commitment, which leads to persistence. Minority status, low parental income, and Carnegie classification levels below Masters negatively impacted communal potential.

Dunleavy and Myers (2008) conducted a qualitative pilot study of college students about their own nagging behavior toward faculty, such as making multiple requests of an instructor to convince the instructor to change an assignment due date. Participants were communications students at a large, Mid-Atlantic University. They found students were able to give specific examples of eight specific nagging behaviors, some of which were disruptive. The behaviors were: “elicit student support, demonstrate frustration with the instructor, strike a deal, challenge instructor authority, elicit instructor sympathy, suggest instructor incompetence, flatter the instructor, and barrage instructor with requests” (Dunleavy & Myers, 2008, p. 15).

Students were surveyed about their perceptions of the following teaching norms identified by Braxton and Bayer (2004): condescending negativism, inattentive planning, moral turpitude, particularistic grading, personal disregard, and uncommunicated course details. They were asked how often they observed the violation of norms and whether they took any action. Students who reported violations as grievous were more likely to take direct action by speaking with the faculty member or department chair.

Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, and Beneke (2009) surveyed faculty at a large, public University in Alaska. Their research design broadened previous research by investigating contrapower (student to faculty) incidents of sexual harassment to include incivility and bullying. Nearly all participants (96% of women and 99% of men) reported being on the receiving end of

at least one uncivil act from a student. Women and men reported different types of incivility, and women were more upset by the acts than men. Women also had a higher frequency of incidents and were more likely to seek support from the chair or dean. Faculty reported that these uncivil incidents impacted their wellness and, in some cases, caused them to change their teaching style.

K. Marchiando, L. Marchiando, and Lasiter (2010) explored the relation between faculty incivility in a nursing program and student satisfaction. The research questions addressed the frequency, educational setting, program satisfaction, and how students responded to perceived incivility. Eighty eight percent of participants said they have experienced incivility from their faculty member, with a nearly even split of whether it was one or two times. Classroom and clinical settings were the places it was most likely to occur. Faculty incivility accounted for 22% of the variance in student dissatisfaction in their program. Most students responded by talking to someone or moving past the uncivil incident. Over half the participants shared a specific incident and over a third said they were “anxious, nervous, or depressed” (p. 613) after the incivility.

In an attempt to examine teacher attrition, Buchanan (2016) interviewed 22 former teachers. Four interviewees cited student behavior and managing the classroom as their reason for leaving. Classroom management was one of the three main reasons interviewees left teaching (Buchanan, 2016).

Seeking to fill a gap in research, Caza and Cortina (2007) surveyed university students from a small, public University in the Northwestern United States about their experience(s) with uncivil behavior. The students had to be above the age of 18, degree seeking, and enrolled at least half-time with updated directory information to participate. They found that peer incivility was slightly more prevalent than top-down incivility, and just as harmful to well-being. Specifically, “incivility was associated with perceived injustice and perceived social ostracism,

both of which linked to decreased satisfaction with the institution” (Caza & Cortinez, 2007, p. 342). The low satisfaction led to less engagement, which also showed a decline in grades. The perception of ostracism was related to distress, but perceived injustice was not. This empirical study asked participants about how many times they experienced uncivil behaviors, the status if the instigator, and uses an interactional justice subscale scale (Colquitt et al.’s (2001), as well as items on academic and psychological stress, and institutional satisfaction. The research methods from similar studies based in the workplace were adapted for higher education. Seventy six percent of respondents reported experiencing some form of incivility, and the feeling of rejection that accompanied the unknown cause for the uncivil act negatively impacted the sense of belonging in the institution. A decline in academic performance and sense of injustice were also effects of uncivil acts.

### **Explanations for Classroom Incivility**

Tiberius and Flak (1999) used the catastrophe theory to explain dysfunctional relationships between the teacher and learner. They wrote that dysfunction in this relationship is more likely to be emotional than public, and offers recommendations for building better relationships as well as repairing a relationship that has experienced trauma. A description of the emotional aspect of an instructor when incivility occurs is described at the conclusion of the article.

Nordstrom, Bartels and Bucy (2009) use research about peer attitudes, consumerism, and narcissism as predictors of uncivil behavior. To measure incivility, researchers adapted a modified version of the Center for Survey Research (2000) study and added positive statements in an attempt to mask the focus of the study. Perhaps most surprising was the gender differences that showed male students more likely to engage in uncivil behavior on each of the

measurements. Thirty questions were asked about uncivil behaviors such as demanding a makeup exam or using a cellphone in class, and 15 questions were asked about neutral behaviors such as raising one's hand were asked with a seven-point Likert type scale of options ranging from never to always. Part-time students were also higher on consumerism and narcissism scales, making them more likely to act in uncivil ways according to the study. Students who indicated they planned to continue their studies in graduate school were less likely to engage in uncivil behavior.

Brown-Wright et. al (2013) give a brief background of classroom disruption in secondary school. Since teacher and student relationships contribute to classroom behavior and teachers who have different values may have more difficulty in forming those relationships, this study sought to contribute to the gap in literature about home-school dissonance and classroom disruption. Amotivation is included as a hypothesized mediator. Amotivation was significantly correlated with home-school dissonance and classroom disruption. "...home-school dissonance emerged statistically significant ( $\beta = .25$ ,  $t = 4.71$ ,  $p = .01$ ) and accounted for 6% of the variance in classroom disruptive behaviors..." (p. 153). Amotivation accounted for 5% of the variance and is a significant mediator.

Kopp and Finney (2013) drew a link from academic entitlement of student to student incivility. Kopp and Finney (2013) used the Academic Entitlement Questionnaire (AEQ), which has eight items and reported strong validity. The questionnaire was used to compare compliant and noncompliant students the AEQ results. Using latent means modeling, authors empirically linked uncivil student behavior with AEQ scores.

An online survey with questions about student and instructor behavior was administered to over 400 students in a general education communications course at a large Southeastern

University (Miller, Katt, Sivo & Brown, 2014). The findings of the study indicated that students who believe their professor is credible are less likely to engage in uncivil behavior, and credibility can be gained through self-disclosure. However, negative self-disclosure can damage instructor credibility. The authors suggest studying instructor and student characteristics/traits to test whether the instructor can curb incivility for specific student populations.

Myers, Goldman, Atkinson, Ball, Carton, Tindage and Anderson (2016) sought to examine student behavior that contributes positively to classroom citizenship. Using the research question, “What types of classroom citizenship behavior do college students use with their instructors and classmates?” (p.67), researchers conducted a pilot and two studies. The pilot survey was one page and tested the definition and directions. The pilot survey was revised and sent to a larger group. It asked students to provide examples of classroom citizenship behavior, (CCB) and researchers coded results. The results were used to create the first survey that asked students about CCB in their previous course. Exploratory factor analysis was used to determine which items to keep, creating one of the nine scales used to create the final survey that addresses the research question. The findings showed three behaviors – involvement, affiliation, and courtesy – were used by students in their previous course. It also highlighted the importance of the classroom environment, as students chose how to engage based on their perception of treatment, classmate friendliness, interest in the topic, and instructor’s interest in them personally.

Bray and Del Favero (2004) summarized the sociological approaches to classroom incivility. They frequently cited the book written by Baxter and Bayer (1999), who did empirical research to show the relationship between faculty and students. A brief summary of each theory as it relates to incivility is below:

- Social control: everyone does what benefits them the most
- Deterrence theory: people avoid doing things for fear of consequences
- Rational choice theory: fear of being caught plus consideration of rewards for behavior
- Anomie: people have attachments to other groups outside the class, so following the class rules is seen as less important than rules for other groups
- Social disorganization: the adjustment to college is so rapid that chaos may ensue
- Social exchange theory: learning is mutual, so if both parties are not participating, one may become uncivil. “The manner in which faculty communicate course material or provide feed- back to students’ class participation can reinforce or diminish students’ learning or academic self-concept. Similarly, student displays of learning and academic progress can serve as reinforcement for faculty in their teaching role” (Bray & Del Favero, 2004, p. 14).
- Social bond theory: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief are the areas that determine or moderate behavior
- Social Learning theory; peer belief and behavior influences how a student will behave
- Conflict theory: the group with power makes rules that supposedly work for everyone and this dynamic guides the class
- Labeling theory: the power label the rules, but peers may also help determine appropriate behavior

Instead of using civility to describe a set of behaviors, Callahan (2011) approached civility as a social construct created by those in power to suppress emotional feedback. The paper

focused on intentional incivility that attempts to impact an outcome. It was written in response to a call for research from a non-managerial perspective. Callahan wrote that corporations and the media create a sense of panic about incivility. Rule followers are rewarded, while outliers are isolated or may lose their job. Once the rules are established, hierarchical leaders enforce rules of civility. Employees then may resist by decreasing work hours or performance.

### **Experimental Research**

Four junior high school students who were “behaviorally disordered” or “learning disordered” as classified by their school were the participants for experimental research by Smith et al. (1988). After using classroom observations to measure baseline classroom behavior, the students were introduced to a points rating system that rewarded students for ranking their behavior for the day and additional points for a score within 1 point of the teacher’s rating. The ratings did reduce off-task and disruptive behaviors but were not successful when they were attempted in the mainstream classroom.

Research by Summers, Begin & Cole (2009) found that in classrooms with informal work groups, the classroom is negatively impacted by incivility but positively impacted by autonomy support (Summers, Bergin & Cole, 2009). In classes with formal work groups and interactive learning, students perceived their autonomy as greater when incivility is not tolerated. The participants of the study were undergraduate students in introductory courses at a Midwestern University and instruments were administered online.

Perry and Steck (2015) explored whether adding iPads to a secondary geometry class would impact engagement, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. Two classrooms participated in the study. The classroom with iPads had an instructor who was proficient in technology and incorporated the use of the iPad in class. Students took surveys and researchers observed



classrooms. Proficiency scores decreased for the iPad classroom and self-efficacy scores increased for the iPad classroom from the beginning to the end of the semester. Off-task behavior increased with the iPads.

This review of the existing literature related to college classroom incivility from the faculty perspective from the past 20 years can be grouped in several themes: gender identity, racial identity, teaching strategies, perception of incivility, impact of classroom incivility, explanations of classroom incivility, and experimental research. The research on the impact of gender and race on the perception of faculty incivility is robust. While there is some research suggesting age or generation of faculty impact classroom incivility, few empirical articles exist. Though similar, teaching experience also has a gap. Age and experience are not necessarily correlated, so it may be important to separate in survey results.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The college faculty perspective on classroom incivility is under-researched. Previous research has shown that the faculty member's race (Braxton & Jones, 2008) and gender (Black, Wygonik & Frey, 2011; Caboni et al., 2004) may impact the amount of disruption experienced (Alberts, Hazen & Theobald, 2010). One study showed that both men and women report experiencing incivility, but women reported feeling more upset and seeing the experiences impact their lives outside of work. An additional study conducted by Black, Wygonik, and Frey (2011) also found faculty women viewed behavior more severely than men. Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010) found women, international, and non-white faculty reported higher amounts of incivility than their peers.

The data suggest potential generational gaps in perception, and one study by Ziefle (2018) that studied two generations did show that the younger generation of faculty reported a higher perception of classroom incivility than the older generation. While this study grouped participants into general age and teaching experience categories, it did not study age or teaching experience specifically or consider them separately. Although some studies compare faculty and student perceptions of classroom incivility, the results of a study using age of instructors and their teaching experience have not been published.

The purpose of this non-experimental study is to investigate whether age or teaching experience impact faculty perceptions of classroom incivility. This research used modified sections of the "Survey on Academic Incivility at Indiana University" developed by the Indiana Center for Survey Research (CSR) in Bloomington with permission from the CSR (Center for Survey Research, 2000). This study also explored a possible relationship between faculty status

or college and disruption. This chapter describes the methodology of the study, a description of the survey and procedures for data collection, and data analysis.

### **Research Design and Variables**

Perception of classroom incivility is the dependent variable and independent variables were gender, race, age, and experience. Gender was indicated as male, female, or other not listed with an optional box to fill in. Race used the institution's pre-defined categories for staff at the time of the survey distribution (spring 2020): American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, Prefer Not to Answer, Two or More Races/Biracial, White. The individual race categories had a low sample size in the individual categories (see Table 1). For the purpose of this study, race was consolidated into two categories: White, and Other (American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black (Non-Hispanic), Hispanic, Prefer Not to Answer, Two or More Races/Biracial). Age was selected using a drop-down menu with options from 20 to 100. Experience was defined as "Experience in years" and was also a drop-down box with options from 0 to 85. Full-time or adjunct status, rank, and college where faculty teach was collected in addition to the incivility data.

### **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

Building on previous research discussed in Chapter Two that has found that gender and race impact faculty perception of classroom incivility, the research questions guiding this study ask whether age and college teaching experience also impact perception. The questions and hypothesis are included below.

#### **Question 1**

1. Is there a relationship between faculty age and perception of classroom incivility?

- a. When controlling for gender, is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?
- b. When controlling for race, is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?
- c. When controlling for gender and race, is there a correlation between age and perception of uncivil classroom behaviors?

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between faculty age and perception of classroom incivility.

- 2. Is there a relationship between faculty teaching experience and perception of classroom incivility?
  - a. When controlling for gender, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?
  - b. When controlling for race, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?
  - c. When controlling for gender and race, to what extent, if any, does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?

Hypothesis 2: There will be a positive relationship between teaching experience and perception of classroom incivility.

### **Context of the Study**

The study was conducted at a large, public institution in the Southeastern United States. The institution has several additional physical locations that offer classes within the region. Seven academic colleges, an honors college, and a graduate school are housed within the

institution, which is accredited to award bachelor's, master's, doctoral, and educational specialist degrees.

### **Participants**

The target population of the study were faculty who taught at least one in-person, undergraduate classroom with 12 or more students in fall 2019. The University's website lists over 850 faculty members. Using the list of faculty who taught at least one in-person undergraduate classroom with 12 or more students in fall of 2019, the Office of Institutional Research utilized stratified random sampling to create a distribution list of faculty from the independent variables in the study that the University could determine using their collected data. The number of faculty invited to take the survey was 191, and 60 responses were recorded, representing a 31.4 % response rate.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 55)*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Gender		
Female	32	58.2
Male	23	41.8
Race		
White	43	78.2
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	1.8
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	3.6
Black (Non-Hispanic)	3	5.5
Hispanic	1	1.8
Prefer Not to Answer	4	7.3
Two or More Races/Biracial	1	1.8
Classification		
full-time faculty	46	83.6
adjunct faculty	6	10.9
other	3	5.5
Rank		
Professor	9	16.4
Associate Professor	9	16.4
Assistant Professor	9	16.4
Instructor	4	7.3

Table 1 Continued

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 55)*

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
Lecturer	18	32.7
Adjunct Faculty	6	10.9
College		
Arts & Letters	26	47.3
Business	5	9.1
Education	5	9.1
Engineering & Technology	3	5.5
Health Sciences	3	5.5
Sciences	13	23.6
Honors College	0	0
Graduate School	0	0
Continuing Education & Professional Development	0	0

**Ethical Protection of Participants**

Prior to data collection, this study was approved by Old Dominion University's Education Human Subjects Review Board. Once approved, the researcher added the survey to Qualtrics, an online survey tool. When participants received an email invitation, it explained that

they were being invited to a study and included a link. The first page was the informed consent letter. The letter explained why they were invited to participate, the confidentiality of their response and identifying data, and that their response is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any time. The lack of known risks and absence of compensation was shared, as well as contact information for the research team. No identifying information, such as name or email address, was collected. Survey data was stored within Qualtrics and a virtual drive through the University, both of which required dual authentication login for access after login to a password-protected computer. Additionally, the researcher completed the Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research training through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) to ensure ethical protection of participants.

### **Measures**

The survey (Appendix A) uses questions from Center for Survey Research's (2000) "Preliminary Report: Survey on Academic Incivility" with minor modification for modernity (such as removing pagers) and the scope of the study (eliminating questions about frequency and related to the effectiveness of managing incivility). A pilot study consisting of a group of representative faculty reviewed the questions for understanding and made suggestions prior to implementation of the survey. The researchers acquired permission from the Center for Survey Research before using the study.

Perception of Classroom Incivility was calculated as a total score of the survey items that ask faculty members to rank on a Likert type scale whether they consider a specific behavior to be uncivil in the classroom. For example, one question asks, "Do you consider students chewing gum in class as incivility?" and gives always, often, rarely and never as possible answers (Center for Survey Research, 2000, p. 2).



For the purpose of this study, Bjorkland and Rehling's 2010 definition of uncivil was used and credited as follows:

uncivil is defined as not in accordance with the unity of the classroom community or is contrary to the well-being of the classroom community, including 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).

### **Procedure**

The researcher used a software program called Qualtrics to collect the data. Qualtrics requires users to have a university account, which is password protected and can be accessed by a single user, though multiple users can be granted access to the Qualtrics data. In this study, the research team members have access to the data. The initial survey request was sent via email, with an automated reminder sent to those who did not participated two weeks later. A third and final request was sent asking for participants.

Qualtrics data was downloaded and transferred into IBM SPSS on the University's virtual drive. The variables were renamed, participants were given an identification number, and question numbers were relabeled with a brief nickname for clarity. Out of the 60 responses recorded, three were removed because they did not include any responses to the questions. Two additional surveys were deleted for incomplete answers, leaving 55 complete surveys.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher ran frequency tables on the categorical variables: gender, race, classification, college, and rank (see Table 1). Descriptive statistics were used for age and teaching experience, the continuous variables (see Table 2).

For 1a, 1b, and 1c, hierarchical multiple regression was used, using dummy variables for gender and race. Hierarchical regression enters predictors "in order of their importance in

predicting the outcome” (Field, 2009, p. 212). Using the research in the literature review as guidance, gender will be entered first, then race, followed by age, and teaching experience.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Continuous Variables*

Characteristic	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Age	49.16	11.81	.28	-.81
Teaching Experience	16.53	10.54	.82	.24

To answer the second research question, hierarchical regression was used with teaching experience as the independent variable and perception of classroom incivility as the dependent variable. Question two was run identically to question one except with teaching experience as the independent variable.

Table 3 provides an overview of the analysis for each research question.

Table 3

*Statistical Analyses for Research Questions*

Question	Analysis
1. Is there a relationship between faculty age and perception of classroom incivility?	
1a. When controlling for gender, how does faculty age impact perception of classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression
1b. When controlling for race, how does faculty age impact perception of classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression
1c. When controlling for gender and race, how does faculty age impact classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression
2. Is there a relationship between faculty teaching experience and perception of classroom incivility?	
2a. When controlling for gender, to what extent does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression
2b. When controlling for race, to what extent does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression
2c. When controlling for gender and race, to what extent does teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility?	Hierarchical Multiple Regression

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether gender, race, age, and teaching experience impact the faculty's perception of classroom incivility. This chapter includes a review of the survey results and analysis used to answer each of the research questions.

#### Data Analysis

##### Faculty Age and Perception of Classroom Incivility

The researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty age impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for gender. The dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, gender was entered as the control variable. Gender and faculty age were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for step 1 was significant  $F(1, 53) = 5.462, p < .001, R^2 = .093$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .076$  (see Table 4). In step 1 of this model, gender accounts for 9% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Being a woman is a significant positive predictor of perception of classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(2, 52) = 3.458, p < .001, R^2 = .117$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .083$  (see Table 4). In step 2 of this model, gender and age together account for 11% of the variance. Since gender was calculated both with and without age, we can see that age accounts for .024, or 2% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Being a woman and age were positive predictors of perception of incivility, meaning perception of incivility increases with age.

For research question 1b, the researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty age impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for race. The

dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, race was entered as the control variable. Race and faculty age were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for step 1b was significant  $F(1, 53) = 6.692, p < .05, R^2 = .112$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .095$ . In step 1 of this model, race accounts for 11% of the variance in faculty

Table 4

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Gender, Age*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Constant	84.74	2.83	
Gender	8.67	3.71	.31
Step 2			
Constant	73.84	9.60	
Gender	10.48	4.00	.37
Age	.20	.17	.17

Note:  $R^2 = .09$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .08$  ( $p < .001$ ). \* $p < .001$ .

perception of classroom incivility. Race is a significant positive predictor, meaning white survey respondents were more likely to perceive classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(2, 52) = 3.316, p < .05, R^2 = .113$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .079$  (See Table 5). In step 2 of this model, race and age together still account for 11% of the variance. Although the results are significant, age does

not make a difference in the perception of incivility when controlling for race. While white individuals are more likely to report perceptions of incivility, an increase in age does not increase the perception of incivility.

Table 5

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Race, Age*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Constant	80.92	3.88	
Race	11.34	4.38	.34
Step 2			
Constant	79.06	8.66	
Race	11.36	4.42	.34
Age	.04	.16	.03

Note:  $R^2 = .11$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .095$  ( $p < .001$ ). \* $p < .001$ .

For research question 1c, the researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty age impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for gender and race. The dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, gender and race were entered as the control variable. Gender, race, and faculty age were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for step 1 was significant  $F(2, 52) = 4.660$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .152$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .119$ . In step 1 of this model, gender and race account for nearly 12% of the

variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(3, 51) = 3.407, p < .05, R^2 = .167$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .118$  (See Table 6). In step 2 of this model, gender, race and age together still account for nearly 12% of the variance. Although the results are significant, age does not make a difference in the perception of incivility when controlling for gender and race together.

Table 6

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Gender, Race, Age*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Constant	79.40	3.95	
Gender	6.06	3.87	.21
Race	8.77	4.63	.26
Step 2			
Constant	71.10	9.55	
Gender	7.69	4.24	.27
Race	8.14	4.68	.24
Age	.16	.17	.13

Note:  $R^2 = .15$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .12$  ( $p < .001$ ).  $*p < .001$ .

### **Faculty Teaching Experience and Perception of Classroom Incivility**

The researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty teaching experience impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for gender. The dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, gender was entered as the control variable. Gender and faculty teaching experience were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for question 2a step 1 was the same as step 1 for question 1a. The results were significant,  $F(1, 53) = 5.462, p < .001, R^2 = .093$  and  $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .076$  (see Table 7). In step 1 of this model, gender accounts for 9.3% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(2, 52) = 3.159, p < .001, R^2 = .108$  and  $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .0074$ . In step 2 of this model, gender and teaching experience together account for 10.8% of the variance. Since gender was calculated both with and without teaching experience, we can see that teaching experience accounts for .015, or 1.5% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility.

Table 7

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Gender, Teaching Experience*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Constant	84.74	2.83	
Gender	8.67	3.71	.31
Step 2			
Constant	81.36	4.60	



Gender	9.64	3.86	.34
Teaching Experience	.17	.18	.13

---

Note:  $R^2 = .09$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .08$  ( $p < .001$ ).  $*p < .001$ .

For research question 2b, the researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty teaching experience impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for race. The dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, race was entered as the control variable. Race and faculty teaching experience were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for question 2b step 1 was the same as step 1 for question 1b. The results were significant,  $F(1, 53) = 6.692$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .112$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .095$ . In step 1 of this model, race accounts for 11% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(2, 52) = 3.287$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .112$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .078$  (see Table 8). In step 2 of this model, race and teaching experience together still account for 11% of the variance. Although the results are significant, teaching experience does not make a difference in the perception of incivility when controlling for race.

Table 8

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Race, Teaching Experience*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
<hr/> Step 1			
Constant	80.92	3.88	
Race	11.34	4.38	.34

## Step 2

Constant	81.12	3.88	
Race	11.39	4.47	.34
Teaching Experience	-.02	.18	.01

---

Note:  $R^2 = .11$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .10$  ( $p < .001$ ).  $*p < .001$ .

For research question 2c, the researcher performed hierarchical regression to determine how faculty teaching experience impacts perception of classroom incivility when controlling for gender and race. The dependent variable was the total score of classroom incivility. For step 1, gender and race were entered as the control variable. Gender, race, and faculty teaching experience were entered for step 2.

The hierarchical regression for question 1c step 1 was the same as step 1 for question 2c. The hierarchical regression for step 1 was significant  $F(2, 52) = 4.660, p < .05, R^2 = .152$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .119$ . In step 1 of this model, gender and race account for 15.2% of the variance in faculty perception of classroom incivility. Step 2 was also significant  $F(3, 51) = 3.407, p < .05, R^2 = .156$  and Adj.  $R^2 = .106$  (see Table 9). In step 2 of this model, gender, race and teaching experience together account for 15.6% of the variance. Teaching experience makes a .4% difference in the perception of incivility when controlling for gender and race together.

Table 9

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Faculty Perception of Incivility with Gender, Race, Teaching Experience*

Step and Predictor Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$
Step 1			
Constant	79.40	3.95	
Gender	6.06	3.87	.21
Race	8.77	4.63	.26
Step 2			
Constant	78.00	4.93	
Gender	6.75	4.16	.24
Race	8.17	4.83	.24
Teaching Experience	.09	.19	.07

Note:  $R^2 = .15$  for Step 1,  $\Delta R^2 = .12$  ( $p < .001$ ).  $*p < .001$ .

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine whether age or teaching experience impact faculty perception of classroom incivility in the undergraduate classroom. To measure classroom incivility, the researchers used a total incivility score on a series of questions about whether specific behaviors are uncivil. The research questions controlled for gender and race when measuring whether age or teaching experience impact perception of classroom incivility. This chapter reviews the major findings, discusses implications for practice, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

#### Major Findings

While the purpose of this study was to determine whether age or teaching experience impact faculty perception of classroom incivility in the undergraduate classroom, it is worth noting that the study results showed gender and race to be significant predictors in perception of classroom incivility, aligning with previous empirical research.

As we saw in research questions 1a and 2a, being a woman is a significant predictor of perception of classroom incivility, accounting for 9% of the variance. These significant gender results for a classroom incivility study are in good company with Kelly and Stanley (2009) and Cassidy, Facuher, and Jackson's (2014) results.

In questions 1b and 2b, race was a higher predictor of perception of classroom incivility, accounting for 11% of the variance. With the way race was coded, this means that individuals who identify as white are more likely to perceive actions as uncivil. These results are inconsistent with previous research. Two studies that show gender and nonwhite race to be

significant were Chavez Rudolph (2005) and Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010). Chavez Rudolph (2005) also discussed the impact of age in her study, noting younger faculty were more likely to attribute student incivility to today's educational environment.

Though not quantitative studies, the other two studies from the literature review, Hendrix (2007) and Monroe and Obidah (2014), address the importance of race as well as the experience of the teacher. Each article mentions the importance of the combination of factors influencing the perception of civility of the teacher, as well as their ability to manage the classroom. These areas, such as power, cultural responsiveness, conflict resolution skills, and intersectionality, may be areas for further study.

Each of the research questions yielded significant results. A summary of the findings is discussed in this section.

### **Perceptions of Classroom Incivility and Age**

When controlling for gender and race, age is not a predictor in perception of classroom incivility. Although the results of the study were significant, a faculty member's age does not impact how they view incivility in the classroom. Women and white respondents accounted for higher perceptions of incivility in this study.

### **Perceptions of Classroom Incivility and Teaching Experience**

When controlling for gender, teaching experience has a 1.5% positive impact on perception of classroom incivility, meaning the more teaching experience someone has, the more likely they are to perceive classroom behaviors as uncivil in the undergraduate classroom.

When controlling for race, teaching experience does not make a difference in the perception of incivility.

When controlling for gender and race, teaching experience has a slight (.4%) positive impact on perception of faculty incivility.

### **Implications for Practice**

The results of this study offer several implications for higher education, described in sections below on faculty, students, and support services.

#### **Faculty**

The results of this study are consistent with research from 25 years ago that women faculty are more likely to experience or perceive classroom incivility.

A recent “Data Snapshot” from the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), combines US Department of Education and Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) data to profile full-time faculty by academic rank and institution type. This 2020 report shows that women are concentrated in non-tenure track positions, earn less than men, on average, and the racial and ethnic composition of faculty does not mirror the US population (AAUP 2020).

Faculty experience of incivility is of importance to note due to their response as shown in the literature. A survey conducted by Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, and Beneke (2009) showed that women reported more instances of incivility, being more upset by these instances, seeking support for a chair or the dean, and were more likely to change their teaching style. A study by

Buchanan (2016) showed that classroom management was one of the three main reasons teachers were leaving the field.

In order for institutions to hire and retain faculty who identify as women, and particularly faculty who are nonwhite, addressing classroom incivility may be of importance, particularly for tenure track faculty based on the AAUP study. Institutions may want to consider training department chairs, deans, and new faculty in University policy and response to classroom incivility.

### **Students**

Although students were not surveyed or the focus of this study, it is clear that their behavior impacts their learning environment, the learning environment of their peers, and the work environment of the faculty. The work of Caboni, Hirschy, and Best (2004) showed that gender and social group membership may factor into perception of what is uncivil to a student. Two studies (Miller, Katt, Sivo & Brown, 2014; Myers, Goldman, Atkinson, Ball, Carton, Tindage and Anderson, 2016) showed that student behavior is linked to how they are treated by their faculty. More specific research is recommended and can be found later in the chapter.

### **Support Services**

The results of this study have likely implications for several administrative functions of the University environment, which will be grouped as Support Services for the purpose of this study, but may be known as: Academic Initiatives, Center for Learning and Teaching, Counseling, Dean of Students, Equity and Diversity, Equal Opportunity, Human Resources, Ombuds, Student Affairs, Student Conduct, Title IX, etc. These areas may support faculty, staff, students, or some combination of these groups.

As faculty seek support for instances of incivility in their class, support services not only need to know the institution's policy as stated above, they will likely be relied upon to provide support with conflict resolution skills, classroom management techniques, presentations for departments and classrooms, and support and possibly discipline for egregious instances of incivility. Depending on the size of the institution, it may make sense to partner with specific offices to provide services. Some services, such as support for sex-and gender-based violence, are required by federal law and can be found at all institutions that accept federal financial aid. Others, such as conflict resolution, may be provided by content matter experts in Counseling, Human Resources, or Student Conduct, depending on the size of the institution and how matters are handled there.

### **Limitations**

Though the institution being used for the study has several campus sites, conducting research at a single institution limits the ability to apply results to other populations or institution types. The instrument used also relies on faculty to report their perceptions without identifying time which could be less reliable than observation during a specific period (e.g. during a specific semester or class).

This study focused on in-person classroom experiences in fall 2019 due to most of the available research taking place in a traditional, in-person, undergraduate classroom. Many institutions, including the one in the study, are now offering online classes. Nearly all educational institutions in the United States became online institutions in March 2020 as the COVID-19 pandemic spread. The full impact from this time period is still unknown, however, many more tools for online learning and connection are being used institution-wide.



While using years of teaching experience in a college classroom is one way to capture data, it may also miss experience that contributes to a positive classroom experience. For example, a professor who teaches many classes in one semester may gain valuable experience. Likewise, an adjunct faculty member who teaches one class at a time for the love of teaching may have the time to devote to pedagogy and student success. A teacher from the K-12 system with many years of experience but not as many years in the college setting may show as not as experienced in this study. A skilled facilitator or college administrator would not be captured by this study, but may possess the ability to navigate classroom incivility without teaching experience.

When comparing the results of this study with other incivility studies, we do not know whether the perception of incivility is greater or whether faculty are experiencing more incivility than at other times. With more research available on incivility, perhaps there is more awareness about what types of behavior are considered uncivil. When more faculty are trained on recognition and response, they may report it on surveys. Response rate of perception is how we measure experience and capture data, which informs decision-making in higher education.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study provides numerous opportunities for future research. Specifically, the researcher recommends broadening the present study to include faculty from other institutions. Having a larger amount of faculty would hopefully diversify the study and test whether the results would stay significant. Of specific interest would be whether race would significantly contribute to faculty perception of classroom disruption, and whether it would remain a disruption for white faculty, or whether having a more diverse faculty pool would make the

results more consistent with previous studies where faculty of color were more likely to perceive or report incivility (Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald, 2010; Chavez Rudolph, 2005).

This study focused on in-person classroom experiences to better align with previous studies. Not even two years after the study was conducted, nearly all college faculty have experienced teaching online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Classroom incivility has some new types that would need to be included in the present study, such as: failing to mute your microphone, having a disruptive background, writing something uncivil in the chat, etc.

It may be useful to collect additional information from study participants, such as qualitative data about their classroom experiences with incivility and its impact. Focus groups or follow-up interviews could shed light on the “why” missing from this data when it comes to whether age or teaching experience impact faculty perception of classroom incivility. If they do not, qualitative research is the opportunity to find out what does impact the perception, and how it impacts the faculty experience in general.

### **Conclusions**

Research related to faculty perception of classroom incivility is limited. Previous research has shown that gender (Cassidy, Faucher, Jackson, 2014; Kelly and Stanley, 1999) and race (Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald, 2010; Chavez Rudolph, 2005) impact faculty perception of classroom incivility. The aim of this study was to expand the literature by identifying whether age or teaching experience also impact faculty perception of classroom incivility when controlling for gender and race. The researcher used multiple hierarchical regression analysis to answer the research questions.

Although the results of the study were significant, age is not a predictor in perception of classroom incivility. The hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between age and perception of incivility was unfounded. Respondents who identified as female and white accounted for higher perceptions of incivility in this study. The results for race were the reverse of what was expected based on previous studies.

Although age was not a predictor, teaching experience is a predictor, meaning the more teaching experience someone has, the more likely they are to perceive classroom behaviors as uncivil in the undergraduate classroom. When controlling for gender alone, these results were higher than when controlling for gender and race. The hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between teaching experience and perception of incivility was founded. All results for the second research question were also significant.

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## APPENDIX A

## Incivility Questions

(Response Options: Always, Often, Rarely, Never)

1. Do you consider students chewing gum in class as incivility?
2. Do you consider students eating in class as incivility?
3. Do you consider acting bored or apathetic as incivility?
4. Do you consider students' disapproving groans as incivility?
5. Do you consider students' sarcastic remarks or gestures as incivility?
6. Do you consider students sleeping in class as incivility?
7. Do you consider students not paying attention in class as incivility?
8. Do you consider students not taking notes in class as incivility?
9. Do you consider students' conversation distracting other students as incivility?
10. Do you consider students' conversations distracting you as incivility?
11. Do you consider students' reluctance to answer direct questions as incivility?
12. Do you consider students using a computer during class for purposes not related to class as incivility?
13. Do you consider students' cell phone disruptions during class as incivility?
14. Do you consider students arriving late for class as incivility?
15. Do you consider students leaving class early as incivility?
16. Do you consider students cutting class as incivility?
17. Do you consider students being unprepared for class as incivility?
18. Do you consider students creating tension by dominating discussion as incivility?
19. Do you consider students' cheating on exams or quizzes as incivility?

20. Do you consider students demanding make-up exams, extensions, grade changes, or special favors as incivility?
21. Do you consider students taunting or belittling other students as incivility?
22. Do you consider students challenging your knowledge or credibility in class as incivility?
23. Do you consider students harassing comments concerning race, ethnicity, or gender, and directed at you, in the classroom as incivility?
24. Do you consider students' harassing comments directed at you in the classroom as incivility?
25. Do you consider students hostile or verbal challenges directed at you in the classroom as incivility?
26. Do you consider students' vulgarity directed at you in the classroom as incivility?
27. Do you consider students' inappropriate emails to you as incivility?
28. Do you consider students' harassing comments or behavior directed at you outside the classroom as incivility?
29. Do you consider students' threats of physical harm against you as incivility?
30. Do you consider students' other behaviors as incivility?

#### Demographic and Additional Questions

1. Gender (Male, Female, Prefer Not to Answer)
2. Age (21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71-80, 81 and above)
3. Classification (full-time faculty; adjunct faculty; other)
4. Race (American Indian/Alaska Native; Asian; Black (Non-Hispanic); Hispanic; Non-Resident Alien; Prefer Not to Answer; Two or More Races/Biracial; White)
5. Teaching Experience (0-5 years, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40, 40+)

6. College (Arts & Letters, Business, Education, Engineering & Technology, Health Sciences, Sciences, Honors College, Graduate School, Continuing Education & Professional Development)
7. Rank (Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor, Assistant Instructor, Lecturer, Adjunct Faculty)

## APPENDIX B

Dear Old Dominion University faculty member,

I am e-mailing today to request your help with my dissertation research on how undergraduate faculty perceive classroom incivility in classrooms with in-person instruction. Because you taught in at least one in-person, undergraduate classroom with 12 or more students in the fall, I am inviting you to participate in this study, which will be active for two weeks.

This study has been approved by the Darden College of Education Human Subjects Review Board. My dissertation committee chair is Dr. Alan Schwitzer and he may be contacted via e-mail at [aschwitz@odu.edu](mailto:aschwitz@odu.edu). You may contact me for additional information at [ebunt002@odu.edu](mailto:ebunt002@odu.edu).

You may click on the link below to view the informed consent and take the survey.

Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV\\_9spyxHJaIPx5p41?Q\\_CHL=preview](https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_9spyxHJaIPx5p41?Q_CHL=preview)

Thank you,

Erin Bunton

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)

## APPENDIX C

Dear Old Dominion University faculty member,

You were recently invited to participate in a survey about your experiences with classroom incivility in classrooms with in-person instruction. This survey focuses on classes you taught in fall 2019 at Old Dominion University.

This study has been approved by the Darden College of Education Human Subjects Review Board. My dissertation committee chair is Dr. Alan Schwitzer and he may be contacted via e-mail at [aschwitz@odu.edu](mailto:aschwitz@odu.edu). You may contact me for additional information at [ebunt002@odu.edu](mailto:ebunt002@odu.edu).

Thank you for your consideration of contributing to classroom incivility research. You may click on the link below to view the informed consent and take the survey.

Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV\\_9spyxHJaIPx5p41?Q\\_CHL=preview](https://odu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_9spyxHJaIPx5p41?Q_CHL=preview)

Please note: Surveys will close on April 8, 2020 before midnight Eastern Time.

Thank you,

Erin Bunton

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[Click here to unsubscribe](#)