



Citation: Chakkambath, R. S., Ananthu, K. S., & Maliakkal, E. T. (2024). Student incivility in classrooms: An insight from the student's point of view with focus on Kerala. *International Journal of Scholars in Education*, 7(1), 47-56. <https://doi.org/10.52134/ueader.1472101>

Student Incivility in Classrooms: An Insight From the Student's Point of View with Focus on Kerala

Ranjith Somasundaran CHAKKAMBATH* Krishna S. ANANTHU** Evin Thomas MALIAKKAL***

Abstract: Educators endeavour to establish classroom settings that foster learning. Nevertheless, it is a frequent occurrence to come across disruptive student conduct that hampers the learning environment we aim to establish. Classroom incivility may be characterized as student conduct that hinders the anticipated progression of the lecture or disturbs the educational environment within the class. After COVID-19, offline classes have begun and students are adapting to the traditional method of classroom coaching once again. The shift from digital to online mode of teaching has also created a sense of change in the general classroom discipline. This research investigates the student incivility from the student's perspective. The research explores factors contributing to such behaviours, focusing on gender and age. The target population is from the State of Kerala, India. The sample size was 244 students from different educational institutions across the State. A structured questionnaire was used to measure different incivility behaviours of students. The study used proportionate analysis for the demographic characteristics and general questions related to classroom incivility. Exploratory factor analysis was used to group the factors that contribute to classroom incivility. The findings provide insights into students' perceptions of classroom incivility, offering educators valuable information to enhance classroom management and develop strategies to address disruptive behaviours effectively.

Keywords: Classroom, Exploratory Factor Analysis, Higher Education, Student Incivility.

*Asst Professor, AMITY Global Business School Kochi, Ernakulam, Kerala, ORCID: 0000-0002-8422-1876, ranjithsc2016@gmail.com (Corresponding Author)

**MBA student, AMITY Global Business School Kochi, Ernakulam, Kerala, ORCID: 0009-0002-5071-8080, ananthukrishna111@gmail.com

***MBA student, AMITY Global Business School Kochi, Ernakulam, Kerala, ORCID: 0009-0000-3326-529X, evinthomas9633@gmail.com

Introduction

Classroom incivility, a complex and multifaceted challenge, has emerged as a significant concern across diverse educational settings globally (Vural & Donat Bacıoğlu, 2020). Characterized by a range of disruptive behaviours that hinder the teaching-learning process, incivility undermines the core purpose of the classroom: fostering effective teaching and learning. While previous research has primarily focused on the perspectives of educators and administrators, a critical gap exists in understanding the student experience of incivility. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the nature and impact of student classroom incivility from the students' point of view within the specific context of higher education institutions in Kerala.

By centering the student voice, this research seeks to illuminate the factors contributing to incivility, the perceived consequences, and potential strategies for prevention and intervention. A particular emphasis will be placed on understanding the role of social norms in shaping students' behaviours and attitudes towards incivility. Segrist, Bartels, and Nordstrom (2018) highlight the influence of social norms on classroom incivility, suggesting that the perception of peer acceptance can significantly impact student behaviour.

According to Spadafora & Volk (2023) notable discrepancy exists in the perception of uncivil behaviours between adolescent students and teachers. While students tend to view teacher-related incivilities as more severe, teachers prioritize student-to-student incivilities as more problematic (Spadafora & Volk, 2023). By exploring this dynamic within the context of Kerala's higher education landscape, this study aims to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of research. The specific focus on Kerala is warranted given the unique socio-cultural context of the region, which may influence the manifestation and experience of classroom incivility. Limited research has examined this phenomenon in the Indian context, particularly from the student perspective. By addressing this research gap, this study offers a valuable opportunity to inform the development of culturally appropriate interventions to enhance classroom climate and learning outcomes in Kerala's higher education institutions. Also with a nuanced understanding of the issue from the students' perspective, this study contributes to the development of targeted and effective interventions to create more positive and conducive learning environments in Kerala's higher education landscape.

Statement of the Problem

Classroom incivility appears in many forms, including texting during lectures, engaging in side conversations, and leaving class early. These behaviours disrupt both faculty and students, compromising the learning environment. Student misbehaviour has been associated with decreased occupational well-being among teachers (Aldrup et al., 2018), with classroom disturbances and disciplinary issues often cited as significant sources of job stress.

Scope of the Study

The study aims to comprehensively understand student classroom incivility among students in higher education. It seeks to explore various factors influencing incivility, such as internal and external determinants, cultural contexts, and the perceptions of both students and teachers. In addition, the study places particular emphasis on examining the roles of gender and age in shaping these behaviours. By analyzing how these demographic variables influence incivility, the study intends to identify specific patterns and trends. This will contribute to a deeper understanding of the underlying causes and provide insights into effective strategies for managing and mitigating uncivil behaviours in the classroom.

Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on classroom incivility and provide a foundation for developing effective strategies to mitigate this issue in higher education settings.

Objectives

To study the Student Classroom incivility in among students in Higher education from the student's point of view.

Hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no association between student classroom incivility and gender

H₀₂: There is no association between student classroom incivility and age

Literature Review

Dimensions and Cultural Contexts of Classroom Incivility

The concept of incivility in classrooms is complex and varies across different cultural and educational contexts. Ani et al. (2021) conducted a study in Indonesia and identified four key factors of uncivil behaviour: disregard for instructors/annoyances, disrespect for others (both verbal and non-verbal), misconduct and integrity violations, and use of cell phones. This multidimensional perspective on classroom incivility was also supported by Asfiati et al. (2022), who suggested that higher education institutions in Indonesia could adopt their instrument as an additional tool to assess the level of classroom incivility.

Perceptions of Incivility: Students vs. Teachers

Perceptions of classroom incivility can differ significantly between students and teachers. Spadafora and Volk (2023) found that adolescent students view behaviours disrespectful towards teachers as more uncivil than the teachers themselves do. In contrast, Hudgins et al. (2022) reported limited agreement between faculty and students regarding their perceptions and experiences of incivility, highlighting a gap in understanding between the two groups. A growing body of research indicates that student incivility is perceived as a significant impediment to the learning environment in various educational contexts (Orfan, 2023).

Contributing Factors to Disruptive Behaviour

Several factors contribute to the occurrence of disruptive behaviour in classrooms. Jati et al. (2019) identified internal factors such as boredom, anxiety, and attention-seeking, along with external factors like fatigue. Additionally, Saini et al. (2023) pointed out factors like attention-seeking and peer appreciation, disorganized family backgrounds, lack of dependency on the instructor, teacher leniency, poor communication, low student–teacher ratios, inadequate infrastructure, and deteriorating social values.

Strategies to Address Classroom Incivility

Addressing incivility in classrooms requires a multi-faceted approach. Bantha et al. (2020) suggested enabling strategies such as providing platforms for students to express their

thoughts without judgment and fostering intellectually stimulating discussions. Weger (2017) emphasized the importance of effective communication, noting that active empathic listening is negatively associated with three types of classroom incivility, underlining the significance of empathetic interactions in managing student behaviour.

Institutional Role in Managing Incivility

Educational institutions play a critical role in managing incivility. Krečar et al. (2016) identified behaviours like chatting, using cell phones, and being unprepared for class as the most prevalent forms of disruptive behaviour, according to both students and professors. Essa and Khaton (2019) proposed that educational programs that provide meaningful information about the types of uncivil behaviours, contributing factors, their impacts, and strategies to prevent and manage incivility could be highly beneficial.

By understanding these multifaceted dimensions and addressing the various factors contributing to incivility, educational institutions can implement effective strategies to create a more respectful and conducive learning environment.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to investigate student classroom incivility in higher education among a specific target group. The focus was on understanding the prevalence and types of incivility behaviours as perceived by students in various educational institutions in Kerala, one of the most literate states in India. The target group comprised 244 students from different educational institutions in Kerala. Kerala is one of the most literate states in India. We employed convenience sampling for data collection due to its practical advantages, such as ease of access to respondents and cost-effectiveness. While we acknowledge the limitations of convenience sampling, such as potential bias and limited generalizability, we chose this method because it allowed us to gather preliminary insights and identify trends in student classroom incivility efficiently. Future studies could employ probability sampling techniques to enhance generalizability.

The survey instrument was questionnaire which was structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted from Bjorklund & Rehling (2010). The questionnaire consisted of 13 classroom behaviours that contributed to incivility. Uncivil behavior in the classroom encompasses a range of actions that disrupt the learning environment and hinder cooperation among students. It can manifest in various forms, from minor acts like inattentiveness to more severe behaviors that are violent, disruptive, rude, or disrespectful. In academic settings, incivility is characterized by actions that interfere with creating a harmonious and cooperative atmosphere for learning (Cahyadi et al., 2021).

Google Forms were used to circulate and collect data from the target group. The participants were asked to rate the level of uncivil behaviors in their perspective. LIKERT scale was used in the questionnaire (1= not uncivil at all and 5= extremely uncivil).

The Cronbach's alpha for the reliability test of the thirteen items related to incivility was 0.925. Cronbach's alpha values of 0.7 or higher indicate acceptable internal consistency according to literature (Taber, 2018). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was conducted for the sample size of $n \geq 50$ which was not significant ($p > 0.05$). So the data was normally distributed as per previous literature (Gupta et al., 2019).

Statistical techniques used included proportionate analysis, Chi-square test and Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA). EFA was done using Maximum likelihood extraction and Promax rotation for the 13 items related to student classroom incivility behaviour. IBM SPSS v23 was used in the analysis for EFA.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1
Demographic characteristic

Age Group	n	%
16-19 yrs.	53	22
20-23 yrs.	142	58
25-27 yrs.	49	20
Gender		
Male	168	69.1
Female	76	30.9
Education		
12th	36	14.8
Graduation	45	18.5
Postgraduation	154	63
Professional (B. Tech/Law/Medicine)	9	3.7
CGPA (/10)		
Less than 6	9	8
6 to 8	142	58
Above 8	93	38

Note: Sample size, n= 244

From Table 1, the largest age group of the respondents was between 20-23 years followed by 16-19 years and males were the majority among the respondents. Most of the respondents were graduates followed by students who had completed their plus two. Interestingly, the Cumulative Grade Point Average(CGPA) of the majority of respondents were between 6-8 while this was followed by students who had CGPA above 8. This shows the performance of the students in their academics was were high.

Chi- Square Test : Age and Student Classroom Incivility

Hypothesis

H₀₁: there is no association between age and student classroom incivility.

H₁₁: there is an association between age and student classroom incivility.

Table 2
Chi-square tests

Test	χ^2	df	p
Pearson Chi-Square	438.085	385	0.032
Likelihood Ratio	217.821	385	1
Linear-by-linear Association	0.145	1	0.703

Note : Sample Size, n =244. p < .05. df stands for degree of freedom.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between age and student classroom incivility. The relation between these variables was significant, χ^2 (1, n = 244) = 438.085, p = .032. This shows evidence there is an association between age and the uncivil behaviour of the students in the classrooms.

Hypothesis

H₀₂: there is no association between grade and student classroom incivility.

H₁₂: there is an association between grade and student classroom incivility.

Table 3
Chi-square tests

Test	χ^2	df	p
Pearson Chi-Square	1350.235	1295	0.139
Likelihood Ratio	368.749	1295	1
Linear-by-linear Association	0.001	1	0.976

Note : Sample Size, n =244. p < .05. df stands for degree of freedom.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relation between grade and student classroom incivility. The relation between these variables was significant, χ^2 (1, n = 244) = 1350.235, p = .139. This shows evidence there is no association between grade and the uncivil behaviour of the students in the classrooms.

Uncivil Behaviour in Classroom from Student's Point of View

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire

Sl No	Uncivil Behaviour	M	SD
1	Continuing to talk after being asked to stop	2.975	1.3321
2	Coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs	3.642	1.5836
3	Allowing a cell phone to ring	2.975	1.3872
4	Conversing loudly with others	3.062	1.2879
5	Nonverbally showing disrespect for others	3.556	1.3874
6	Sleeping	2.679	1.1492
7	Arriving late and/or leaving early	2.889	1.1068
8	Using a palm pilot, iPod, mobile or computer for non-class activities	3.074	1.2627
9	Nonverbally indicating dissatisfaction with an assignment, activity or grade	2.852	1.2561

10	Fidgeting (hand or feet movement) that distracts others	2.728	1.2943
11	Eating and drinking	2.704	1.3271
12	Yawning	2.383	1.168
13	Nose blowing	2.494	1.2158

Note : M stands for mean and SD for standard deviation.

Coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs has the highest average score (M= 3.642, SD =1.58), suggesting it's the most frequent behaviour. Yawning and nose blowing have the lowest average scores (M= 2.383, SD=1.16 and M= 2.494, SD=1.21), indicating they are the least frequent behaviours.

Exploratory Factor Analysis: Factors influencing Student classroom Incivility Behaviours

Table 5

Pattern component matrix, eigen values, and total variance percentage for components obtained by maximum likelihood with promax rotation method

Variables	Component	
	1	2
Coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs	0.888	
Non verbally showing disrespect for others	0.818	
Continuing to talk after being asked to stop	0.749	
Conversing loudly with others	0.684	
Allowing a cell phone to ring	0.669	
Nonverbally indicating dissatisfaction with an assignment, activity or grade	0.475	
Arriving late and/or leaving early		0.994
Sleeping		0.968
Using a palm pilot, iPod, mobile or computer for non-class activities		0.576
Yawning		0.497
Nose blowing		0.442
Fidgeting (hand or foot movement) that distracts others		0.43
Eating and drinking		0.38
Eigenvalues	6.798	1.429
Percentage of total variance	48.384	8.525

Note: Factor loadings < .035 have been omitted from the table.

The KMO value is 0.885, and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity chi-square is 656.995 with a degree of freedom 241 and a significance <0.05, according to the obtained table. The

outcome of the summary proved that the data was suitable for factor analysis as indicated in previous studies (Wu et al, 2023). Maximum Likelihood factor analysis with promax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for the 13 items of the variables under investigation. The result generated two factors with eigenvalues 6.79 and 1.42 respectively. After rotation, the first factor accounted for 48.38 % of the variance, the second factor accounted for 8.52%, Table 5 displays the factor loadings for rotated factors where loadings less than 0.35 have been omitted.

The first factor, identified as “Disruptive behaviour”, had strong loadings on 5 items out of the six. This included the following- Coming to class under the influence of alcohol or drugs, Nonverbally showing disrespect for others, Continuing to talk after being asked to stop, Conversing loudly with others, Allowing a cell phone to ring, Nonverbally indicating dissatisfaction with an assignment, activity or grade. The second factor was “Inattentive and Disengagement Behaviour” which had four items with loading greater than 0.35. This included Arriving late and/or leaving early, Sleeping, Using a palm pilot, iPod, mobile or computer for non-class activities, Yawning, Nose blowing, Fidgeting (hand or foot movement) that distracts others, Eating and drinking.

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics for the factors of student classroom incivility

	Description	M	SD
1	Disruptive Behaviour	19.062	6.569
2	Inattentive and Disengagement Behaviour	19	6.566

Note: Sample size, N= 244. M and SD stand for mean and standard deviation respectively.

From Table 6, it is evident that between the factors generated, the sample as a whole relatively showed “Disruptive Behaviour” (M = 19.06 , SD = 6.56) when it comes to student classroom incivility.

Previous literature mentions that classroom incivility in adolescents can be an early indicator of future bullying behaviour, emphasizing the importance of addressing and reducing uncivil actions before they escalate into more serious issues (Spadafora & Volk, 2023). Our study offers valuable insights into student classroom incivility, identifying two main types of behaviours: disruptive and inattentive/disengaged. These findings have significant practical implications for educational practitioners and policymakers. To address the most common disruptive behaviours, such as attending class under the influence of alcohol or drugs, institutions can develop targeted interventions. These might include stricter campus policies, counselling services, and substance abuse education programs. To foster a positive classroom environment and reduce nonverbal disrespect and continuous talking, strategies could involve setting clear behavioural expectations, using positive reinforcement for good behaviour, and encouraging mutual respect among students and faculty.

Enhancing student engagement is also crucial. This can be achieved by using engaging teaching methods, integrating technology meaningfully into the curriculum, and providing flexible breaks to help maintain student attention and participation. Professional development programs for faculty can equip them with effective strategies for managing classroom incivility. Training on conflict resolution, classroom management techniques, and creating inclusive and respectful learning environments can be particularly beneficial.

The research literature also stresses that incivil behaviour in classrooms will hinder the development of educational policies for a better learning environment (Orfan, 2023).

Policymakers can use these findings to develop comprehensive policies that address classroom incivility. Such policies should outline clear consequences for disruptive behaviours and provide support mechanisms for students who struggle with engagement. By implementing these practical measures, educational institutions can create a more conducive learning environment, reduce incidences of classroom incivility, and enhance overall academic success.

Conclusion

This research aimed to understand student classroom incivility in higher education from students' perspectives. The study found significant associations between age and student classroom incivility, indicating that age influences uncivil behaviors in classrooms. The demographics of the target group showed that the majority were male graduate students with a CGPA between six to eight which was evidence of high performance. The results showed that there was no significant association was found between grade and student classroom incivility. The outcome of the study pointed out that certain incivil behaviours were more noticed by the students compared to others. Exploratory Factor analysis identified two main factors influencing student incivility: disruptive behavior and inattentive/disengagement behavior. The authorities need to look into the potential dangers of these incivil behaviours and training for the teachers to manage the students better.

References

- Aldrup, K., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Göllner, R., & Trautwein, U. (2018). Student misbehavior and teacher well-being: Testing the mediating role of the teacher-student relationship. *Learning and Instruction*, 58, 126–136. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.05.006>
- Asfiati, A., Cahyadi, A., Hendryadi, H., & Hartinah, S. (2022). Assessing measurement quality of multidimensional classroom incivility scale in higher education. *Frontiers in Education*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.858549>
- Bantha, T., Sahni, S. P., & Yadav, M. (2020). Identification of enablers for reducing student incivility in classrooms—An exploratory investigation. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 9(2), 193–199. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v9n2p193>
- Bjorklund, W. L., & Rehling, D. L. (2010). Student perceptions of classroom incivility. *College Teaching*, 58(1), 15–18. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25763408>
- Cahyadi, A., Hendryadi, H., & Mappadang, A. (2021). Workplace and classroom incivility and learning engagement: the moderating role of locus of control. *International Journal of Educational Integrity*, 17, 4. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40979-021-00071-z>
- Cahyadi, A., Hendryadi, H., & Suryani, S. (2021). Thoughts on incivility. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies*, 8(1), 129–142.
- Essa, H. a. E. E., & Khaton, S. E. (2019). Students' perception of incivility behaviors and its frequency of occurrence inside school environment. *Egyptian Journal of Health Care*, 10(2), 322–334. <https://doi.org/10.21608/ejhc.2019.126412>
- Hudgins, T., Layne, D., Kusch, C. E., & Lounsbury, K. (2022). An analysis of the perceptions of incivility in higher education. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, 21(2), 177–191. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-022-09448-2>
- Jati, A. F., Fauziati, E., & Wijayanto, A. (2019). Why do the students do disruptive behavior in English classroom? A case study on senior high school students in one of the small town in Indonesia. *International Journal of Language Teaching and Education*, 3(2), 130–141. <https://doi.org/10.22437/ijolte.v3i2.7701>
- Krečar, I. M., Kolega, M., & Krampus, V. (2016). Students' and professors' perception of occurrence and disturbance of disruptive classroom behaviors. *The European*

- Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences.*
<https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2016.11.20>
- Mishra, P., Pandey, C. M., Singh, U., Gupta, A., Sahu, C., & Keshri, A. (2019). Descriptive statistics and normality tests for statistical data. *Annals of cardiac anaesthesia*, 22(1), 67–72. https://doi.org/10.4103/aca.ACA_157_18
- Orfan, S. (2023). Student incivility in higher education of Afghanistan: Lecturers' perspectives. *Cogent Education*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2282302>
- Saini, P., Jain, N., Chaudhary, S., & Vernekar, S. (2023). Student behaviour: Indiscipline in class room. *Journal of Statistics and Management Systems*, 26(3), 419–433. <https://doi.org/10.47974/jsms-1036>
- Segrist, D. J., Bartels, L. K., & Nordstrom, C. R. (2018). “But everyone else is doing It:” A social norms perspective on classroom incivility. *College Teaching*, 66(4), 181–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/87567555.2018.1482858>
- Spadafora, N., & Volk, A. A. (2021). Child and youth classroom incivility scale (CYCIS): Exploring uncivil behaviors in the classroom. *School Mental Health*, 13(1), 186–200. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-020-09405-7>
- Spadafora, N., & Volk, A. A. (2023). How do adolescent students and their teachers conceptualize classroom incivility? *Brock Education Journal*, 32(2), 58–80. <https://doi.org/10.26522/brocked.v32i2.974>
- Taber, K.S. The use of Cronbach's Alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education*, 48, 1273–1296 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2>
- Vural, L., & Donat Bacıoğlu, S. (2020). Student incivility in higher education. In INASED, *International Journal of Progressive Education*, 16(5), 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.29329/ijpe.2020.277.19>
- Weger, H. (2017). Instructor active empathic listening and classroom incivility. *International Journal of Listening*, 32(1), 49–64. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10904018.2017.1289091>
- Wu, R. M. X., Zhang, Z., Zhang, H., Wang, Y., Shafiabady, N., Yan, W., Gou, J., Gide, E., & Zhang, S. (2023). An FSV analysis approach to verify the robustness of the triple-correlation analysis theoretical framework. *Scientific Reports*, 13, 9621. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-35900-3>