Faculty Members' Experience of Student Incivility in Public Institutions of Higher Education: A case study of a conflict-stricken country

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Abstract. Incivility, a growing challenge in higher education institutions, interferes with and disrupts the learning process. This study examined faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities in institutions of higher education in Afghanistan. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 289 faculty members who were teaching in various higher education institutions across Afghanistan. Descriptive and inferential statistics and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that faculty members experienced varying degrees of a wide range of incivilities in and outside the classroom, including conversing loudly in the class, interruption, and harassment. They also experienced a variety of incivilities related to assessment and grading. A small number of them experienced more serious forms of incivilities including beating, stabbing, and death threats. The findings also revealed that there were not significant differences between participants' experiences of student incivility by their gender, but there were significant differences between faculty members' experience by their level of education and years of teaching experience. The study recommends faculty members and higher education institutions take practical measures to address incivilities inside and outside the classroom in order to create a safe learning environment for faculty members and students.

Keywords: student incivility, uncivil behaviors, classroom incivility, faculty members, higher education

1. Introduction

There are differences of opinion about the definition of incivility in the literature. Feldmann (2001) defines incivility in academic setting as "any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative

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learning atmosphere in the classroom". Clark and Springer (2007) describe incivility as "speech or action that is disrespectful or rude and ranges from insulting remarks and verbal abuse to explosive, violent behavior". According to Luparell (2005), incivility is rude or disrespectful acts and behaviors that violate common courtesy rules. These definitions and others in the literature have at least one thing in common: incivilities are disapproved acts or behaviors. The concept of incivility varies from culture to culture; one act or behavior may be uncivil in a culture while it may not be so in another culture (Eka et al., 2016; Masoumpoor et al., 2017). For instance, many faculty members in Afghanistan may consider "eating in a classroom" an incivility while it may not be considered as such by American faculty members. Furthermore, definitions of incivility differ from person to person (Orfan, 2022). For example, "using a smartphone" in the classroom might be an incivility for one faculty member while it may not be so for another. Galbraith (2008) and Mohammadipour et al. (2018) argue that incivility in an academic setting takes place when stakeholders (e.g., faculty members, students, and academic administrators) breach norms of mutual respect, which results in growth of fear and hostility between the stakeholders.

Scholars have grouped students' incivilities into various categories. For instance, Meyers (2003) classified incivilities into overt and covert acts or behaviors. Overt incivilities are those that are easily visible and observable, e.g., "speaking with another student in the class", "using phone", and "laughing during a lecture". On the other hand, covert incivilities refer to acts or behaviors, which are not very noticeable, e.g., "not taking part in class activities" and "sleeping during a lecture". Feldmann (2001) classified classroom incivilities into four categories: annoyance (e.g., not paying attention in the class and sleeping during a lecture), classroom terrorism (e.g., cheating on quizzes or tests and harassing students or faculty members), intimidation (e.g., challenging faculty members' knowledge) and threats or harm on a person (e.g., threatening to physically harm students or faculty members). Connelly (2009) and Hernández and Fister (2001) grouped students' incivilities into more severe and less severe categories. More severe incivilities are acts or behaviors of hostile or threatening nature (e.g., verbal attacks, stalking and intimidation) while less severe incivilities are annoying behaviors or acts (e.g., sleeping during a lecture and disinterest in classroom activities). The vast majority of students' incivilities reported by studies (e.g., Ausbrooks et al., 2011; Elder et al., 2010) were of low intensity.

Studies on faculty members' perceptions of students' uncivil behaviors revealed that student incivility has been on the rise (Alberts et al., 2010; Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010), and a wide number of studies examined faculty members' views and experience of students' incivilities in higher education in different countries, including developed and developing contexts. Vural and Bacıoğlu (2020) investigated Turkish faculty members' perspectives and experiences of students' incivilities. They collected data from 250 faculty members teaching at various Turkish universities using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. They found that faculty members experienced a number of students' incivilities, and the most common were not studying, not attending the lecture and playing with a phone. They also reported a correlation between students' incivilities and faculty members' years of teaching

experience and seniority. More experienced and senior faculty members encountered fewer uncivil behaviors of students.

Hyun et al. (2022) investigated South Korean faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities. They used interviews to collect data from 14 faculty members, who were teaching at various nursing universities at the time of the study. Their findings revealed that the participants experienced a wide range of students' incivilities including showing defiance, coming to the class late, eating during the class, applying make-up, playing on phones, leaving the class early, asking for grade changes and requests for unreasonable favors. Wahler and Badger (2016) investigated faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities in social work graduate and undergraduate programs. They used a questionnaire to collect data from 327 faculty members from various higher education institutions. Their results showed that faculty members experienced a wide variety of students' incivilities to varying degrees. They frequently experienced less severe forms of incivility including eating in the class, texting and tardiness. Faculty also reported that they rarely experienced more severe forms of incivilities. For instance, one of the participants reported receiving a death threat from a student and another one reported being stalked by a student. Furthermore, undergraduate students committed incivilities more frequently than graduate students did. A wide number of studies explored various aspects of students' incivilities in the following countries and reported that faculty members experienced various students' incivilities to varying degrees: Oman (Natarajan et al., 2017), Iran (Rad & Moonaghi, 2016), Indonesia (Eka et al., 2016), China (Clark et al., 2012) and USA (Olive, 2006).

Almost all studies on students' incivilities were conducted in developed and developing countries. However, very few studies examined students' incivilities in higher education in war-stricken countries like Afghanistan where decades of conflicts have damaged education and higher education institutions and their infrastructure (Berger & Thoma, 2015; Giustozzi, 2010; Noori et al., 2023), especially during the rule of the Taliban Regime (1996–2001), which barred girls and women from attending schools and higher education institutions (Ahmadi, 2022; Babury & Hayward, 2014; Chuang, 2004; Orfan, 2021). To the best of the authors' knowledge, only one study (Orfan, 2022) investigated students' views of faculty incivility, which showed that students considered faculty members' 30 behaviors uncivil to varying degrees and experienced them to a varying extent. For instance, they rated grading students based on *waseta* (students ask a person of authority to request from a faculty member a passing or extra grade), cursing students, harassing comments, threatening to fail, making too tricky exams, and preferential treatment as the most uncivil. The current study investigates faculty members' experience of students' incivilities in higher education of Afghanistan. The following questions are used to guide the study.

1. To what extent have Afghan faculty members experienced students' incivilities?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences in Afghan faculty members' experience of students' incivilities by their gender, education level, and years of teaching experience?

2. Method

2.1. Design

The research is a mixed methods study. The authors used a survey questionnaire to collect data for the study. That data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The questionnaire contained an open-ended question that encouraged the respondents to mention other forms of students' incivilities and describe their experiences in detail. According to Rouder et al. (2021), open-ended questions are an effective way to collect authentic responses or nuances in opinions. They can be used to solicit more support for responses to closed-ended questions. The respondents were asked to write about their experiences in detail (Allen, 2017). Open-ended questions can also be used as primary questions on an issue or aspects of an issue where closed-ended questions do not elicit the data required (Rouder et al., 2021). Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data derived from responses to the open-ended question.

2.2. Participants

Two hundred and eighty-nine faculty members who were working in different undergraduate programs (e.g., language and literature, economics, engineering, education, medicine, and agriculture) in various public higher education institutions in Afghanistan participated in the study. Approximately 18% of the respondents were female and 82% of them were male (Table 1). The reason for low participation of female faculty members was the fact that women accounted for only 14% of faculty membership in higher education of Afghanistan at the time of the study (Ministry of Higher Education, 2021). Approximately 68% of them held a master's degree and approximately 27% of them had a bachelor's degree at the time of the study. Approximately 6% of the respondents had a PhD. Most of the respondents (38%) had 6–10 years of teaching experience followed by respondents with 0–5 (30%). 18% and 12% of them had 11−15 and 16−20 years of teaching experience, respectively. A tiny number of them (3) had over 20 years of teaching experience.

2.3. Instrument

To develop the questionnaire instrument, the authors used a focus group discussion and carried out literature review. Focus group discussions were used to support the identification of relevant and context-specific practices that are specific to higher education of Afghanistan and nonexistent in other countries. For instance, students in Afghanistan higher education institutions will ask a person of authority (e.g., administer, a deputy minister, a governor, a deputy governor, a chancellor, or vice chancellors) to request from a faculty member a passing or extra grade when they feel that they will fail

the test. This practice is called waseta, which literally means a mediator (Orfan, 2023). The authors conducted a focus group discussion with five faculty members at Takhar University. A consent letter,

Table 1. Respondents' demographics

Category		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	51	17.64
	Male	238	82.36
Education level	Bachelor's	77	26.64
	Master's	196	67.82
	PhD	16	5.53
Years of teaching experience	0–5	86	29.76
	6–10	111	38.41
	11–15	53	18.34
	16–20	36	12.46
	21+	3	1.03

which informed them of the purpose of the discussion and their voluntary participation, was used to secure their agreement for participation in the discussion. One author guided the discussion while the other author took observation notes. As a result of the focus group, the authors developed 17 questionnaire items. An additional 13 items were adapted from other studies (Bray & Del Favero, 2004; McKinne & Martin, 2010; Swinney et al., 2010; Vural & Bacıoğlu, 2020; Wahler & Badger, 2016).

The questionnaire composed of three parts. The first part asked the respondents about their demographic information (gender, education level and years of teaching experience) and the second part, with 30 items, asked the respondents to state their experience with students' incivilities on a five-point Likert Scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = fairly often; 5 = frequently if not always). The last part contained an open-ended question, "Have you experienced any other students' incivilities? Please describe your experiences in detail," that allowed the respondents to mention other forms of students' incivilities and describe their experience in detail.

The questionnaire was read by two English faculty members at the English Department for improvement. The problematic items were identified and revised based on their comments. The questionnaire was translated into Farsi, the lingua franca of Afghanistan, because English is a foreign language in Afghanistan and many faculty members (particularly those in humanities) lacked proficient English to make sense of the questionnaire items. Both the English and Farsi questionnaires were reviewed by a faculty member of English Department to make sure that the translated items conveyed the precise idea of the English items. The questionnaire was revised based on the faculty member's comments. Furthermore, two faculty members at the Department of Farsi were requested to read the Farsi questionnaire for improvement, and the problematic items were revised based on their feedback.

Prior to the actual administration of the questionnaire, a pilot test was administered with 13 faculty members at Takhar University to measure the reliability of the items. The results of the reliability test showed that the Cronbach's alpha for the questionnaire items was 0.907, which indicates high internal consistency.

2.4. Procedure

The study and its instrument were approved by the Research Committee of Takhar University. The questionnaire was designed online using a Google Form, and a snowball sampling technique was used to collect data for the study. The authors shared the questionnaire link with at least two faculty members in various higher education institutions through social media (e.g., Facebook), messaging applications (e.g., WhatsApp), and emails, and they were requested to take part in the study. They were also requested to share the link with their colleagues. Furthermore, the link was shared on several virtual groups with 100s of faculty members. It was open for response for a month, January 03–February 02, 2021. The respondents were required to read a consent statement and agree to participate in the study through checking a box with "I am willing to take part in the study" prior to proceeding to complete the questionnaire. It took the participants 15–20 minutes on average to complete the questionnaire.

2.5. Analysis

The data were downloaded as an Excel sheet and were examined to ensure that all the questionnaires were completed appropriately. They were numerically coded and were imported to SPSS version 26.0 for analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequency, the mean and standard deviation of the data while inferential statistics (Independent Samples T-test and One-Way ANOVA) were used to explore the differences between two and more than two groups of respondents. Thematic analysis was used to analyze responses to the open-ended question. The authors used six stages of thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The authors read and reread the responses to get themselves familiarized with the data while they were making notes to obtain a general understanding of the content of the responses. In the second stage, the authors performed an initial round of coding with a focus on addressing research questions. The authors employed an open coding approach, where codes were identified and adapted as the coding process evolved, as described by Maguire and Delahunt (2017). Moving on to the third stage, the authors conducted a systematic review of these codes, searching for recurring patterns and connections. Initially, the codes were grouped based on their relevance to the research questions. Subsequently, in the following phase, the authors refined the preliminary themes, ensuring that they accurately represented the data patterns. The fifth stage involved validating the themes by revisiting the interview data, comparing each theme against the interview transcripts to ensure adequate data support. Finally, the authors named and reported the themes,

substantiating them with supporting evidence, primarily in the form of quotations from the transcripts.

3. Results

3.1. Faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities

The authors used descriptive statistics to answer the first research question "To what extent have faculty members experienced students' incivilities?" As Table 2 shows, faculty members experienced a wide number of classroom incivilities to varying degree. Nine items (doing other courses' homework in the class, using social media, whispering in the class, texting, disinterest in class activities, loud conversation, using phone, coming late, and skipping classes) received a mean score of between 3.51 and 3.9. That is, faculty members fairly often experienced these incivilities. The mean score of 11 other incivilities was between 2.20 and 2.86 (Table 2). That is, faculty members sometimes experienced these incivilities including a student's littering in the classroom, leaving class to answer the phone and laughing during the class.

In addition, five items (21–25) sought the faculty members' experience of student's incivilities outside the classroom. As Table 2 shows, belittling, harassing comments, threatening, challenging faculty's knowledge, and complaining about other faculty members received a mean score of between 2.37 and 2.64. That is, faculty members sometimes experienced these incivilities outside the classroom. Moreover, the last five items (26–30) asked about faculty members' experience of incivilities related to assessment. All five behaviors (cheating on exams, turning in paper late, requesting for extra grade, using *waseta* and focusing on getting good grades rather than understanding the course content) received a mean score of over 3.37 and 3.79, which means that faculty members fairly often experienced these incivilities.

Responses to the open-ended question "What other forms of students' incivilities have you experienced?' revealed a variety of other forms of incivilities, which are categorized into four themes and subthemes. Each theme is presented with support from the faculty members' responses.

Classroom incivilities

Faculty members felt that certain students tried to interrupt active students who wanted to take part in the class activities especially discussions (37 mentions). Respondent 171 stated: "I used discussions in my classes a lot. Sometimes, a few students, who never took part in discussions despite my encouragement, signaled to participating students to stop talking and sit down." They also believed that male students had a feeling of dominance in the classroom (78 mentions). Respondent 91 noted:

Table 2. Faculty members' experience of students' incivilities

No.	Statement	Mean	SD
Classroom incivilities			
1	Doing homework for other courses during the class	3.9	0.836
2	Using social media during the class	3.76	0.913
3	Whispering to other students during the class	3.71	0.905
4	Texting in the class	3.68	1.003
5	Disinterest in classroom activities	3.64	0.8
6	Conversing loudly with other students	3.59	0.786
7	Using phone during the class	3.57	1.062
8	Coming to the class late	3.55	0.708
9	Skipping classes	3.51	0.941
10	Littering in the classroom	2.86	1.168
11	Leaving class to answer the phone	2.85	0.952
12	Laughing during the class	2.62	0.807
13	Poor personal hygiene (odor)	2.52	1.003
14	Joking in the classroom inappropriately	2.5	0.917
15	Sleeping during the class	2.48	0.848
16	Leaving class early	2.48	0.86
17	Interrupting faculty members while talking	2.48	0.954
18	Answering to phone in the class	2.32	1.013
19	Chewing gum during the class	2.31	0.723
20	Reading irrelevant materials during the class	2.21	0.841
Out-of-class incivilities			
21	Belittling faculty members	2.37	0.978
22	Harassing comments (ethnic, racial and gender) directed at faculty members	2.54	1.084
23	Threatening faculty members	2.35	1.054
24	Challenging faculty members' knowledge	2.3	0.938
25	Complaining about a faculty member to another	2.64	1.071
Assessment-related incivilities			
26	Cheating on exams and quizzes	3.41	0.998
27	Turning in a paper late	3.37	0.802
28	Requesting for extra grade	3.52	0.943
29	Getting a person of authority by a student to request faculty members to give a passing or extra grade	3.79	0.999
30	Focusing on getting good grades more than understanding the course content	3.47	0.91

Likert Scale (1 = never; 2 = rarely; 3 = sometimes; 4 = fairly often; 5 = frequently if not always)

> I required my students in one of my courses to complete group projects and I tasked female students, who were high performers, with leading the groups. Some male students criticized my practice and were unwilling to work in the groups under the leadership of girls. Ultimately, I managed to convince them to work in the groups. The results of these girls-led projects were outstanding.

Another respondent 204 stated, "Male students always tried to dominate discussions in the classroom, and they were talking out of their turn though female students outnumbered them in the class. As a teacher, I ensured that everyone had equal opportunity in class activities." Furthermore, faculty members mentioned that they experienced students taking off their shoes and sitting inappropriately in the class (21 mentions) as Respondent 243 stated,

> In one of my classes in Spring Semester 2019, a student took off his shoes and sat on a chair cross-legged. Students around him started complaining about odor coming from his shoes. I asked him to put on his shoes and sit appropriately. He didn't listen to me, and I had to kick him out of the class.

Table 3. Faculty members' experience of other types of incivilities

Themes	Subthemes
Classroom	Interrupting students who want to take part in the class activities
	Male students' feeling of dominance in the class
	Taking off shoes in the class
	Inappropriate sitting in the classroom
Out of classroom	Beating
	Stabbing
	In-person death threats
	Death threats on the phone
	Leading a group of students against a faculty member
	Entering the office without knocking
	Complaining about the number of lessons
	Backbiting faculty members
	Using street language when talking to faculty members
Assessment	Facilitating cheating for peers
	Students' request of a faculty member to give a passing or extra grade to another student
	Requests of a person of authority to give a passing or extra grade to students
	Questioning another student's grade
	Accusing faculty members of giving a high grade to students with personal relationship

Out-of-classroom incivilities

Faculty members reported more serious forms of students' incivilities in their responses to the open-ended question and most of them took place due to assessment and grading. They experienced being beaten (7 mentions) and being stabbed (2 mentions). Respondent 156 noted:

> I was beaten on my way back home after giving the final exam of one of my courses in Fall Semester 2017. A group of young people with masked face stopped me and asked me why I failed a particular student. I told them that I failed no one. He didn't study and that was why he failed. They started beating and kicking me. I screamed and they escaped in a car when some people showed up. I reported the incident to my institution, but unfortunately, they could do nothing since the student was a relative of a local powerful authority.

Respondent 266 stated:

> I was stabbed by a student who failed one of my courses in 2016. He never cared about his studies and never did the assignments. The incident was reported to the university and police, but nobody could do anything just because the perpetrator was a close relative of the city's mayor. It made me lose my motivation and enthusiasm to teaching and didn't take it seriously.

Furthermore, faculty members received in-person death threats (17 mentions) and death threats via telephone (33 mentions). Respondent 104 stated:

> Sometimes, I was threatened to death both in person and on the phone for not giving a passing or high grade to a particular student. Once I was walking to the university when a student stopped me, showed me a pistol and told me that he would kill me if I didn't give him a passing score.

Faculty members also reported that certain students made an alliance with a group of students to challenge them (9 mentions), as Respondent 17 stated:

> In 2019, a few students failed in one of my courses. These students never did the assignments and never took part in class activities despite my encouragement. They answered a few questions on the question sheet in mid-semester and final exams. They made a group of students, who were their friends, and complained about me to the Department. They even accused me of discrimination.

Faculty members reported that students complained about the number of lessons (154 mentions) and entered their office without knocking (24 mentions). Respondent 7 stated, "The courses I taught in

Fall Semester 2020 required me to lecture. The lecture time was 50 minutes. When I lectured for half an hour, some students shouted, Teacher! That is enough! That is enough!" They also reported that students backbit other faculty members in front of them (13 mentions) and used street language when communicating with them (9). Respondent 261 stated:

> Sometimes, students came to me and told me that X teacher could not teach well and could not answer students' questions. I knew that the teacher, they were complaining about, always tried to use different teaching methods to help his students learn. I disagreed with them on the spot and warned them of backbiting other faculty members in front of me.

Assessment-related incivilities

Faculty members reported that they experienced other types of incivilities with respect to assessment and grading. They experienced that some students facilitated cheating for other students (185 mentions) and students requested them to give a passing or extra grade to another student (43 mentions). Respondent 117 stated: "I frequently observed that students cheated to each other and passed on cheat sheets to one another in final exams despite the departmental and my warning." Respondent 78 also noted, "Students, usually high performers, called me after the exams and asked me to pass X student for invalid excuses. For instance, they said that the student had a family problem. It upset me the most.

Faculty members reported that they received requests from people of authority based in their institutions (e.g., chancellors, vice chancellor and deans) and outside the institutions (e.g., governors, mayors, and members of parliament) as well as colleagues and friends to give a passing or extra grade for certain students (203 mentions). Respondent 25 stated:

> I usually turned off my phone during final exams due to not receiving calls from authorities, friends or relatives asking me to offer a passing or extra grade to certain students. In numerous instances, people came to my house to make such a request. For instance, in final exams of fall semester 2018, my house door was knocked one evening. I opened the door, and it was the mayor's secretary who took a message from the mayor to me, asking me to offer a high grade to a particular student.

The faculty members also reported that they were questioned about another student's grade (43 mentions) and were accused of giving a high grade to a student based on personal relationships (27 mentions). Respondents 235 stated:

> I sometimes were questioned by students especially low performers about why X student received

a high grade, and they did not. They argued that X student helped them answer all the questions in the exam, but they received a lower grade than them.

3.2. Differences in participants' experience by their demographic profiles

Inferential statistics were used to answer the second research question "Are there any statistically significant differences in faculty members' experience of students' incivilities by their gender, education level and years of teaching experience?" An independent samples *T*-test was used to determine the differences between female and male faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities by their gender. The p-value for all the items was greater than the alpha level (0.05). Therefore, it is concluded that there are not significant differences between female and male participants' experience of student incivility. Furthermore, the authors used a one-way ANOVA test to examine the differences between participants' experiences of student incivility by their level of education. As Table 4 shows, the p-value for nine items is less than the alpha level (0.05), which indicates significance. That is, there are significant differences in faculty members' experience of nine incivilities by their level of education. Faculty members with a bachelor's degree experienced nine incivilities (e.g., cheating on exams and quizzes) more frequently than those with a master's degree or a PhD.

In addition, a one-way ANOVA test was used to explore the differences between participants' experiences of student incivility by their teaching experience. The p-value for seven incivilities (i.e., doing homework for other courses during the class, making waseta, using social media, laughing during the class, interrupting faculty members while talking, threatening a faculty member, and cheating on exams) was less than the alpha level (0.05), which indicates significance. In other words, faculty members with 0–5 years of teaching experience had to deal with these incivilities more frequently than those with over 6 years of teaching experience.

4. Discussion

This study investigated faculty members' experiences of students' incivilities in higher education institutions of Afghanistan. The findings showed that faculty members experienced a wide range of students' incivilities in the classroom to varying extent. They fairly often observed that students did other courses' assignments, used their phone, texted and used social media in the classes. They also fairly often experienced that students were disinterested in class activities, conversed loudly in the class, came to the class late and skipped classes. Faculty members sometimes experienced a number of other incivilities in the class (e.g., littering in the class, leaving class early, and sleeping in the class). The results of responses to open-ended question showed that some faculty members experienced that certain students interrupted their peers who tried to take part in the class activities, male students had a feeling

Table 4. Differences between faculty members by their education level

No	Item	Bachelor's	Master's	PhD	P-value
1	Doing homework for other courses during the class	4.345	3.863	3.492	0.001
2	Cheating on exams and quizzes	3.732	3.401	3.101	0.000
3	Getting a person of authority by a student to request the faculty to give a passing or extra grade	4.034	3.774	3.571	0.000
4	Challenging faculty members' knowledge	3.232	2.241	1.502	0.000
5	Reading irrelevant materials during the class	2.787	2.123	1.741	0.031
6	Disinterest in classroom activities	3.860	3.69	3.371	0.000
7	Using social media during the class	3.982	3.564	3.731	0.042
8	Coming to the class late	3.699	3.541	3.401	0.000
9	Whispering to other students during the class	3.875	3.718	3.529	0.000

of dominance in the classroom, and students took off their shoes and sat improperly in the class. These findings are on a par with those of the studies by Hyun et al. (2022) and Vural and Bacıoğlu (2020) who reported that their respondents experienced a number of students' incivilities, including using phone, little attention to lectures, coming to class late, leaving the class early, showing defiance and requesting grade changes.

Numerous factors can account for these findings. Public higher education institutions admit students through national entrance examination. Many students are admitted to majors in which they have no interest at all (Daxner & Schrade, 2013). For instance, students, who are interested in studying engineering, get an admission in law school. They have to study the major unless they can afford to pursue their favorite major in a private higher education institution. They express their disinterest in courses in which they are uninterested through incivilities. Many faculty members still use traditional and teacher-centered approaches in their teaching, which facilitate little or no engagement of students in the learning process particularly in the classroom, and they do not respond to the needs of students (Akramy, 2021; Maleki, 2021). Consequently, students demonstrate and communicate their dissatisfaction and frustration through uncivil acts (e.g., using phones in the class). Furthermore, many students, particularly in first and second year, do not know what constitute incivilities. Neither the Ministry of Higher Education nor the higher education institutions themselves have policies in place to

address incivilities on campuses (Orfan et al., 2022). Furthermore, faculty members rarely describe incivilities in their course syllabi, and they rarely speak about them in their classes. Therefore, students end up committing acts, which are considered uncivil by faculty members.

Faculty members also experienced students' incivilities outside the classroom. They were sometimes belittled and received harassing comments and threats. Sometimes, students challenged their knowledge and complained about other faculty members to them. The results of responses to open-ended question revealed that some faculty members reported that students entered their office without knocking, backbit other faculty members in front of them, and they used street language when communicated with them. Faculty members also reported that they were bullied and challenged by a group of allied students. As well, the majority of the participants reported that students complained about the extent of lessons. This can be justified by the fact that the quality of education in public schools of Afghanistan is poor (Asadullah et al., 2019), and school graduates are not well-prepared for higher education. When they attend classes in higher education institutions where faculty members lecture for almost an hour, they get stressed out.

A tiny number of them experienced more serious forms of incivilities; they were beaten and stabbed for not giving certain students a passing or extra grade. Some of the faculty members received death threats in person and on the phone. The major factors for these serious forms of incivility were assessment and grading, corroborating Tantleff-Dunn et al. (2002) who found testing and grading as two of the most important sources of conflict between faculty members and students. To the best of the authors' knowledge, no other studies in the literature reported such serious forms of incivility (i.e., beating and stabbing) except threats of potential violence towards faculty members (e.g., Sprunk et al., 2014) and death threats (e.g., Wahler & Badger, 2016). This can be explained by the fact that Afghanistan has gone through several decades of conflicts, and it has been wrestling with ethno-religious extremist groups like Taliban, who have been operating in Afghanistan particularly in rural areas since their collapse in 2001 (Sakhi, 2022). These groups weakened the role of the central government in remote provinces where local commanders and armed men gained more power. These men could force people to meet their demands including getting a faculty member to give a passing or extra grade for their relatives or friends. If, for instance, faculty members did not respond to the armed men's demands, they would be threatened with violence.

Furthermore, faculty members experienced a number of students' incivilities related to assessment and grading. They fairly often observed that students cheated on exams, turned their paper late, requested improved grades, used *waseta* and focused on getting good grades rather than learning the content. This finding is in line with Arab and Orfan (2023) who found that undergraduate students in Afghanistan universities cheated for various reasons including getting a good grade and passing an exam. This result is also consistent with Rafique (2022) whose respondents reported that their students cheated on tests. The responses to open-ended question demonstrated that most of the faculty members observed that students facilitated cheating for their peers in exams, some students requested them to give a passing or

extra grade to another student. The authors believe that faculty members use more traditional summative assessment techniques that require students to memorize the content. Furthermore, what faculty members assess at the end of a semester is not aligned with what they teach during the semester, and some faculty members make excessively hard or tricky exam questions, as reported by student respondents in Orfan (2022). These factors may cause students to choose other ways (e.g., cheating on exams) to obtain good grades in their courses. The vast majority of faculty members reported that they received requests from authorities on campus and off campus as well as from colleagues, friends, and relatives to give a passing or extra grade to a particular student. This finding can be accounted for by the widespread nepotism and corruption in governmental and nongovernmental organizations in Afghanistan. For instance, a job applicant with few qualifications with close relationship with a high-ranking official in the organization can get the job while the most qualified applicant is not hired.

Some faculty members also reported that they were questioned about the grade of another student, and they were accused of giving a high grade to certain students based on their relationship. This can be accounted for by the fact that students' grades are not considered private by higher education institutions; they are printed out as grade sheets and posted on noticeboards or other platforms (e.g., walls or windows), which are visible to everyone on campus. When some students notice that their peers obtained a higher grade, they may question faculty members about their grades or accuse them of giving high grades to other students.

The results showed that there were not statistically significant differences between women and men faculty members' experience of student incivility. However, there were significant differences between faculty members by their level of education and years of teaching experience. Faculty members with a bachelor's degree experienced nine incivilities more frequently than those with a master's degree or a PhD. The authors believe that the faculty members with a bachelor's degree may not have the expert knowledge of courses they teach, as they are required to teach at least four courses especially in remote provinces (Orfan et al., 2021). Therefore, students challenge their knowledge more frequently than that of those with a master's or a PhD. The authors also believe that these faculty members frequently use more traditional and teacher-centered approaches in their teaching (e.g., lecturing for the whole class session) in which students have little or no opportunity to interact with one another or with the faculty member in and outside the classroom. They may lack skills of classroom management and may use assessment methods (e.g., fill in the blanks) that require more rote learning. These approaches may not meet the needs of students, and as a result, they show their frustration and dissatisfaction in uncivil acts, e.g., using social media during their lecture.

Furthermore, faculty members with fewer years of teaching experience (0–5) dealt with seven incivilities more frequently than those with more years of teaching experience (6+). This finding is consistent with that of the study by Rafique (2022) and Krecar et al. (2016) who reported that junior and young faculty members were more vulnerable to students' incivilities. The authors of the current study believe that the novice faculty members may lack classroom management skills to effectively deal with

students' incivilities in the classroom. Moreover, higher education institutions provide little or no training workshops, in particular on teaching and assessment methods for the newly hired faculty members. They may end up using teaching methods that do not take students' needs and interests into consideration. Therefore, they experience some classroom incivilities (e.g., students' interruption and laughter in the class) more frequently compared to faculty members with more experience. Furthermore, these faculty members may use more traditional assessment techniques (e.g., True/False questions and fill in the blanks), which make it hard for students to get a good grade unless they memorize the whole textbook. Thus, students choose uncivil ways (e.g., threatening faculty a member, making *waseta* and cheating on exams) to get a good grade.

5. Conclusion

The study revealed that faculty members experienced a wide variety of incivilities in the classroom including students' loud conversation, interruption and coming to the class late. They also experienced students' incivilities outside the classroom. For instance, they were belittled, received harassing remarks and threats. A small number of them experienced more severe forms of incivility such as beating, stabbing, and receiving death threats. Faculty members experienced a wide range of incivilities related to assessment including cheating on exams, facilitating cheating for peers, making *waseta* and accusing faculty members of giving a higher grade to certain students.

The study has implications for faculty members and higher education institutions. Faculty members should use more student-centered approaches to fully engage students in the learning process, and they should diversify their teaching methods in order to respond to the needs and interests of students with different backgrounds and learning styles. They should enumerate acts/behaviors they consider uncivil in their course syllabi and discuss them with their students. Higher education institutions should develop policies to address incivilities on their campuses and should raise awareness about incivilities and its negative impacts on various stakeholders. The authors collected data from various higher education institutions using snowball-sampling technique through an online survey. Therefore, the results may not be generalized to all higher education institutions in Afghanistan, particularly the private sector. Further studies on incivility in higher education with larger a sample from both public and private higher education institutions are recommended, and various instruments including interviews and class observations should be used for data collection. Future research can center on the relationship between the ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and incivilities in higher education. They can also focus on the correlation between faculty incivility and students' level of performance.

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