THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY AND SENSE OF

COMMUNITY OF ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

by

John Loren Spohn

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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ABSTRACT

Incivility is not just bullying and physically threatening students. Uncivil behaviors include more mild forms of classroom disruption, including plagiarizing, posting terse responses, and continually asking for extensions for assignments. A student's motivation for learning can be hampered, when subjected to incivility causing classroom disruptions. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between student incivility in the online learning environment, as scored by the Incivility in Online Learning Environments instrument, and the student's sense of community, as measured by the Community Classroom scale. This quantitative study seeks to extend Tuckman's model (1965) of the Theory of Group Development as it relates to incivility in asynchronous learning. A non-experimental correlational design is employed to examine the online student's sense of learning and connectedness for online undergraduate students at a large private Christian university. The participants were undergraduate students taking an online course and the number of participants were 129. A Pearson's Product-moment correlation was used to interpret the research results. Findings are examined and recommendations for future research will be made.

Keywords: *incivility, learners, asynchronous, motivation, behavior, trust*

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to my family. First, to my wife, Hope- thank you for urging me to start down this path, your flexibility, and your willingness to listen to me speak about the progress of this research even when you wanted to sleep. Secondly, to my daughter, Mia- you have only known me going to school in your life. Now I have reached my end, as I hope you do one day. Thirdly, to my parents, John and Marilyn- thank you for encouraging me from class to class and joining with Hope in getting me into school. Fourthly, to my in-laws, Ray and Carolyn- thank you for always asking about the latest updates to the research and showing your interest in my success. To all of you- I could not have done this without your prayers- I love you all.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background

Almost 32% of all students took at least one online course during the 2012 academic year, equaling 6.7 million students (Allen & Seaman, 2013). The ever growing use of this educational option for many students requires that a sense of community be developed. As the world of education moves into a greater global environment through the advancements in communications and other electronic devices (Friedman, 2007; Wei & Wang, 2010), instructors need to become more diligent regarding their actions in the classroom and students need to be ready to learn. Clark, Werth, and Ahten (2012a) state attention has been given to the traditional classroom, but the online environment has created another avenue for incivility.

The issue of incivility within the asynchronous learning environment is an issue related to the development of an online community within the course. According to Rovai (2002a), the community will obligate its members to respond to any demand the community places upon the member, which will strengthen the bonds between the member and the group, thus letting members know they are valued by the community. The level one feels in regards to community hinges upon the participation of each student; increased positive interaction can increase the feeling of community.

Incivility broadly defined is a mild and common form of interpersonal mistreatment that is centered on violating the common forms of respect (Anderson & Pearson, 1999; Cortina & Magley, 2001). According to Anderson and Pearson (1999), this is to include behavior with "ambiguous intent to harm the target" (p.457). However, when the classroom is specifically examined, civility focuses upon all actions interfering with the harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere (Feldman, 2001).

Historically, incivility in the classroom would include sleeping, bullying, challenging the instructor, daydreaming, etc. (Feldmann, 2001). Most of these actions are ones in which the student could view and dismiss the action; however, it would still interfere with the student's learning process for a brief moment. Likewise, most of these actions focus upon the physical actions of the uncivil person. The attention given to the instructor can be read by examining the body language of the student or the level to which the instructor maintains classroom decorum will be evident in their actions (Alexander-Snow, 2004).

Originally, instructors in higher education dealt with disrespectful behavior, which harmed or threatened to harm other students. However, with the further development of more portable means of entertainment, instructors must now include uncivil behavior that poses little interpersonal danger (Boysen, 2012). Electronics have now added a new twist to how people interact. Students always feel the need to be connected (Hernandez & Fister, 2001). These students are habitually phone texting and browsing the internet (Rowland & Srisukho, 2009). This new level of incivility includes classroom cell phone usage, listening to music with headphones, nonacademic computer usage, and side conversations, which are actions noticed more often by students (McKinne & Martin, 2010). Besides the classroom setting, there are more interactions outside of a formal classrooms in which faculty and student interact (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2011); these can include emails, passing in common areas on campus, and interactions on social media.

With this new proliferation of electronic communication devices in the general population, many educational institutions have begun to take advantage of the opportunity asynchronous learning offers their institutions (Rovai, 2002a). While this new medium offers students and institutions a new way to interact, it also limits others forms of communication.

These forms are the nonverbal, such as body language and gestures, and the fluctuation of the voice. Additionally, the asynchronous element of most of the distance courses do not allow for a continual conversation or exchange of ideas.

As growth occurs in educational opportunities, there is evidence that uncivil behavior is not just a problem in the United States. Studies have begun to show its prevalence in different cultures, including Canada, Kuwait, Japan, China, and the United Kingdom (Burke, Karl, Peluchette, & Evans, 2013). Socially, incivility is more often reported by women (Alberts, Hazen, & Theobald, 2010) and is fed by an individual's societal stereotypes of gender, race, and ethnicity (Alexander-Snow, 2004). Faculty members, on the other hand, do not show any differences in their reporting of classroom incivility based on the number of years of instructing experience (Bell et al., 2010).

On a smaller scale, the classroom becomes its own social environment. Within this social environment, the student is by default a part of a classroom community in which he or she is enrolled. This community of learners can be defined in terms of recognition of membership in the community or spirit; trust, including candor and positive feedback exposing learning deficiencies; interaction, which allows the process of understanding to take place; and meeting the needs of each one's educational needs or learning (Rovai, 2002a). When one of these elements is harmed or hampered by another member of the community, then there has been an interruption in the learning process and the educational needs of a member of that community will be unsatisfied.

Interruptions within this community can have student or faculty-based causes. Some of the student-related issues can center on consumerism, narcissism, emotional issues, and generational gaps. Consumerism is the view that the student is the customer, buying the product

of education. The students feel that because they have paid tuition the faculty owes them something (Nordstrom, Bartels, & Bucy, 2009). This "something" can take the form of a grade for an assignment or the course, flexibility in the due date of assignments, or turning a blind eye when the students rudely interact with their classmates in a discussion board. This thinking by the students leads them to feel that they do not owe the rest of the classroom community trust or interaction.

Narcissism is the self-centered notion that the student is entitled to special privileges by who he or she is. Like consumerism, the narcissist feels he or she owes nothing to the rest of the classroom community. This belief allows the narcissist to lack empathy and strong response to any candor or feedback. His or her self-esteem has been threatened and this can result in retaliation (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Nordstrom et al. (2009) noticed a positive correlation between narcissism and the likelihood the student will engage in incivility.

Differences in generations can contribute to classroom incivility and to the overall community of learners. Asynchronous learning mixing students from different generations, and these different generations have different influences that have developed their world views. Currently *Baby Boomers* (1946-1964), *GenX* (1965-1981)*, and *GenMe* (1982-1999) are mixing in the higher education classroom, according to Twenge et al. (2010). *Generation Y*, which is made up of GenX and GenMe, like informality, are technologically current, and embrace diversity (Twenge et al., 2010). All of these attributes would seem to lend themselves to asynchronous learning, as individuals will come from different cultures and the ability to use many different learning tools would be of great benefit. However, this same generation is labelled as one that needs to be supervised (Society of Human Research Management, 2004). *Generation Y* has some differences between the sub-groups in the value put on material items

and rewards, but they put more emphasis on leisure time, while *Baby Boomers* put more emphasis on work and its outcomes (Twenge et al., 2010).

Just as there are factors centered on the student, there are also factors contributing to classroom incivility that are faculty-based. In the asynchronous environment, the community has instructors that may artificially put learning communities together within the classroom community, such as projects or work groups. When the instructor takes control to develop the community, the instructor takes on the responsibility to facilitate learning and assist in the student's sense of community. Alexander-Snow (2004) states students will become uncivil if the instructor's behavior runs contrary to their societal expectations. For example, based upon the faculty information provided in an online course, some students of a similar race or generation in a course may see the feedback from an instructor as beneficial and challenging, while other students of another race or generation may see it as argumentative.

Likewise, students will perceive how the instructor handles student interactions during the first couple of modules or student reports of incivility in the classroom. Classes that do not have an instructor that acts on disturbances can quickly become disordered (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). This does not mean the instructor should be quick to act. Instructors should keep in mind that some students are only classroom bullies, some are only victims, and some are both, so they should not rely on previous experiences to dictate current interventions (Marini, 2009).

The issue of incivility and classroom community is best examined through Group Development Theory. According to Engle, Boozer, Cessar, and Correia (2003), group development theory can be applied to online or asynchronous learning environments, because it describes how individuals in a learning community develop clear communication. Maslow (1943) holds that "when a need is fairly well satisfied, the next prepotent ('higher') need emerge"

(p. 395). In this case, the need would be the group's ability to communicate clearly in order to move onto building a sense of community and learning.

Forming, the first stage according to Tuckman (1965), is when the group tests one another in an interpersonal manner. Those seen as the leaders of the group begin to form at this stage (Tuckman, 1965). Secondly, the group will encounter the Storming stage. The rest of the group begins to find their place and individuals test the leader and other members in the group. Others during this phase express their feelings through interpersonal issues and this phase is where the group may stagnate indefinitely (Bennis & Shephard, 1956).

When the group has successfully moved beyond the first two stages, they will find themselves moving into the Norming stage (Tuckman, 1977). The framework of the group is formed and a sense of belonging is created. Rovai (2002a) describes this as connectedness; however, relationships need to be developed with the instructor, and just as important are the student's relationship among peers in the learning community (Milhelm, 2012). As collaboration is a large part of the asynchronous learning experience, the student actively participate, since the opposite could demonstrate possible narcissism to the other students.

In order to feel valued, the instructor and the student's peers need to give appropriate and timely feedback during the next stage, which is called Performing. The feeling of value and respect comes with added importance as there is a lack of verbal feedback and correspondence can be misinterpreted (Rovai, 2003). The timely feedback needs to be reflective in nature, giving the student an understanding of how to improve. This feedback can be from the instructor and the student's peers, when completing group assignments or individually on the classroom's discussion board.

Threats to learning take place when the community of learners cannot be defined in terms of recognition of membership, trust, interaction, and meeting the needs of each one's educational needs or learning (Rovai, 2002a). These threats to the learning community occur each time there is classroom incivility. Trust is lost as feedback is seen as argumentative or no feedback is given, and interaction is neglected as each student does not genuinely know where they are deficient, needs are not being met; thus, students do not wish membership in that learning community and flounder while looking for a safe environment. Clark, Olender, Kenski, and Cardoni (2013) state that teaching and learning can be accomplished when the relationship between faculty and student in the asynchronous learning environment becomes safe and positive. Therefore, faculty and students take responsibility for their actions and reporting of incivility in the classroom.

Problem Statement

The traditional classroom has seen a growth in the uncivil behavior as electronic devices have become more prevalent. Because of these new devices in the classroom, many of the uncivil behaviors were not witnessed, even into the 1980s (Nilson, 2003). Incivility in the traditional classroom has led to the creation of codes of conduct, student intervention programs, and other actions aimed at informing students about what is appropriate and the possible consequences one faces for inappropriate behavior (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). As incivility has become a greater problem at the university, studies have been conducted over the last decade to examine the acts of students and instructors on campus.

However, students are looking for ways to meet their educational needs with those same electronic devices. In response, universities are expanding the offerings in asynchronous learning, which has seen growth every year nationally (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Dropout rates

seem to be 10 to 20 percentage points higher for distance learners that traditional students (Rovai, 2002a). Rovai (2003) proposed that instructors assist the distance learner in feeling a connectedness to the online course in order to help with retention. Likewise, Clark et al., (2012a) has begun to study the nature of student and faculty incivility in the online learning environment as it relates to the nursing profession.

Most of the research that has been completed focuses upon upper level or professional level courses (Clark et al., 2012a; Burke et al., 2013) and public universities (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Incivility at the private university has seen to be at a lower rate than that of public institutions, but that has been examined only in regards to on-campus courses (Alberts et al., 2010). Of the studies mentioned, most have primarily relied upon the faculty's responses in the research, outside of Clark et al. (2012a). The problem is that little literature exists examining the incivility in the asynchronous learning environment as it relates to building the student's sense of community in required undergraduate online courses. Therefore, Burke et al., (2013) ask that more "empirical research be done exploring incivility in online education" (p.8), as there has been a focus only upon aggressive language in online discussion boards.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this quantitative correlational study is to test the theory of Group Development that relates the online classroom incivility to the sense of community, while controlling for the course level for online undergraduate students at a large private Christian university. The predictor variable of interest is that the student's sense of civility will be generally defined as behavior that is uncivil and disruptive. The criterion variable of a student's sense of community will be generally defined as the sense of belonging and membership to a group. The participants', from a large private Christian university that has students from across

the United States, taking asynchronous general studies courses, a majority of the students were 26+ years old and the number of original participants was 133 with a final number of 129 after incomplete surveys and outliers were removed.

Significance of the Study

In 2012, there were almost 7 million students taking at least one online course (Allen & Seaman, 2013). Institutions need to become aware that only sanctioning the most serious forms of incivility do not help with retention. The number of uncivil students retained may lead to the loss of other students after the victim perceives an injustice has been rewarded (Albert et al., 2010). Students will view the institution the same way they view the bully (Burke, 2013).

To that end, Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) requested further research into what students felt were uncivil behaviors and what the students observe that affects them. The study conducted at a public university by Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) asked two questions regarding the view students have regarding classroom incivility. First, Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) asked what classroom behaviors seen by students were the most uncivil, and secondly asked which uncivil behaviors were seen most often. The most uncivil behaviors were continuing to talk after being asked to stop, coming to class under the influence, and allowing a phone to ring; while the least uncivil behavior was facial expressions, nodding to other students, and nose blowing (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2010). Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) found a negative correlation between the most egregious classroom behaviors and the perceived frequency with which they occur.

Later Clark, Werth, and Ahten (2012a) studied incivility with online nursing students and faculty at a public university. Clark et al. (2012a) asked both quantitative and qualitative questions regarding incivility that was witnessed over the last twelve months to these two groups; however, this study is concerned with only the quantitative questions. These questions

concerned online classroom behavior students and faculty consider the most uncivil committed by faculty and students online. The second asked the perceived frequency of uncivil student and faculty behavior. Making racial, sexual, or religious slurs; criticizing nontraditional subcultures; and taking credit for others' work (Clark, Werth, & Ahten, 2012a) were the top three uncivil activities witnessed by students. The fourth question, as answered by the students, found faculty making personal attacks and threatening comments; name calling and making rude comments; and making belittling comments towards students were the uncivil behaviors seen the most frequently (Clark et al., 2012a).

Both of these studies asked similar question with different research designs. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) asked that others do a similar study with different populations, while Clark et al. (2012a) needed to begin incivility research with their new instrument and find what the educational repercussions are. This study will build upon the work Clark et al. (2012a) and Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) began at public universities; however, the study will go into a large private Christian university, in a different area of the country, and examine online education repercussions with different participants, as these researchers requested.

Research Question

The following research question is proposed:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between undergraduate students' sense of incivility and their

sense of community while taking an online course at a large private Christian university?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are proposed:

H$_0$1: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of community* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H$_0$2: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of learning* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H$_0$3: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of connectedness* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

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Definitions

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The following definitions were used for this study:

1. Asynchronous education—learning which is characterized by independent study by a student, generally at their own pace, separated by distance (Bernard et al., 2004)

2. Distance learner—Duguet defines it as, "anyone who is not actually in the presence of the teacher while learning, whether in a study room, in the next building, at home or in a place located hundreds, even thousands, of miles away" (quoted in Brown, 2001, p. 20).

3. Environment—Galbraith and Jones (2010) write that it is made up of "elements such as values, beliefs and attitudes, as well as a guiding vision or philosophy…grounded in authenticity and credibility" (p. 7).

4. Culture—the values, ideologies, and beliefs a group uses to determine their way of life (Eagleton, 2000).

5. Interaction—"is a feeling that mutual benefit comes from discussions…an important element of the learning process" (Rovai, 2000, p. 287).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Approximately one-third of the students in higher education took at least one online course during the 2012 academic year (Allen & Seaman, 2013). With this added reliance upon the asynchronous learning environment concerns have been raised as to classroom civility between students and from students and faculty (Clark et al., 2012a). There are many students accessing education by taking advantage of the online learning. These students are from different generations and ethnic backgrounds. These differences in students and in the faculty effect how students see the online classroom and their contributions (Stork & Hartley, 2014). Variations in student needs, ages, and reasons for taking the course may distort some interpretations of other student's activities.

Incivility in the classroom inhibits collaboration, discourages students, affects institutional retention, and the faculty member's treatment of the class (Burke, Karl, Peluchette, & Evans, 2013). Levine and Cureton (1998) found that historically civil behavior has declined over time. That being said, the majority of work covering incivility is student-student or faculty-student in the traditional classroom. Traditional classroom incivility has a different set of behaviors that can be seen as uncivil; however, non-verbal language in the traditional learning environment can clarify the communication in the learning environment (Galbraith & Jones, 2010).

Beginning with Clark and Springer (2007), there has been more recent studies into the traditional incivility of student behavior regarding communication and the use of electronic devices. While the findings related specifically to the traditional classroom, Clark and Springer (2007) asked that future research examine incivility's impact on the educational process. Clark

(2008) and again Clark and Springer (2010) soon investigated the traditional nursing classroom's perceptions of incivility, finding incivility in nursing education often results in psychological distress in the faculty and student perceptions of incivility negatively impacts learning. Clark et al. (2012a) finally began looking outside the traditional classroom; asking if online students felt there was a problem with incivility, what behaviors might be considered uncivil, and if the student or instructor was more likely to engage in incivility. During this time Clark, Werth, and Ahten (2012a, 2012b) developed the Incivility in Online Learning (IOLE) survey and conducted their research in the Northwest part of the United States in baccalaureate completion programs.

Other studies called for research regarding incivility in learning environments with specific behaviors being studied. These studies look to compare traditional classroom levels of incivility to the online learning environment. Galbraith and Jones (2010) begin by examining cheating and plagiarism, as this form of incivility speaks to academic dishonesty and was related to traditional and online learning. Academic incivility is a general category in which a student disrupts their own learning by inhibiting collaboration and discourages students from studying (Gailbraith & Jones, 2010). Knepp (2012) feels academic dishonesty disruptions needs to be more fully understood and the students need to be asked what behaviors they most frequently see others doing.

During this time, Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) were asking what behaviors students found uncivil and occurring most often. Later, Bjorklund and Rehling (2011) began research into the actions witnessed most often and which behaviors seemed to be considered the most uncivil outside the classroom regarding faculty-student interaction. These behaviors were tied to communications regarding grade changes, additional time to complete assignments, forgiveness of late penalties, and not keeping appointments among other behaviors (Bjorklund & Rehling,

2011). As these studies were conducted at a small mid-western public school, Bjorklund and

Rehling (2010, 2011) called for additional research into these areas to be done at a private

university.

Defining Incivility

According to the literature, any behavior's level of civility is subjective (Alexander-

Snow, 2004). Incivility is defined as aspects of mistreatment that center on violating common

forms of respect others would normally expect in any interpersonal interaction (Anderson &

Pearson, 1999; Cortina & Magley, 2001). Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) state that incivility in

the classroom is any behavior that disrupts learning, discourage student participation, or interfere

with the goal of the group. Landrum (2011) writes that many of the behaviors once thought to be

appropriate and happened most frequently changed over time. As different settings and newer

technologies become available, these behaviors become more related to distraction or ignoring

another (Nworie & Haughton, 2008).

Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) state faculty members have a subjective view as to what

may be considered civil and uncivil behavior in the classroom. Nilson (2003) follows by saying

that the diversity of students is another major cause, as what is thought of as academic values and

norms is different between students. With varying ideas as to what is acceptable behavior one

can see why Berger's (2000) definition of disruptive or disrespectful behavior or speech is not

enough. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) define incivility in the classroom environment as

behavior that is

> 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, disrupting classroom learning, discourage the instructor from teaching,

discourage other students from participating, derail the instructor's goals for a period, etc.

(p. 16).

Therefore, incivility becomes a failure to mutually respect one another in a teaching-learning environment (Clark, 2008).

Student Incivility. Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) noted that American society has been declining overall, becoming more uncivil. Civility in the classroom, as with society, has become less civil as students become more socially isolated (Hersch, 1998). Classroom student incivility is defined as actions disrupting the harmonious and cooperative learning environment (Feldman, 2001). Clark (2012) adjusts the definition of incivility in an asynchronous learning environment to be disruptive behavior as defined as any speech or action that interferes with the teaching/learning environment. This is the definition that will be used in this research. Clark (2008) states these behaviors disregard and are insolent to those in the classroom and create "an atmosphere of disrespect, conflict, and stress" (p. E38). Students engaged in this level of incivility in the classroom foster fear, anger, hostility and resentment (Clark, 2008).

Different levels of incivility in the classroom can be experienced by faculty and students. Connelly (2009) labels these different levels as 'more serious' and 'less serious'. Behaviors in a traditional classroom that can be categorized as 'less serious' would be:

1. Napping during class;

2. Disapproving sounds;

3. Acting bored or disinterested;

4. Not attending class;

5. Challenging the instructor's credibility and subject matter knowledge;

6. Controlling discussions;

7. And not actively listening (Connelly, 2009).

Clark (2010) points out that 'less serious' acts of incivility are limited in the asynchronous learning environment. Not attending the class, challenging the instructor, and dominating the discussion boards would apply to the distance course (Clark, 2010). A "cumulative effect of inappropriate behaviors takes a toll on students as they expend energy to cope with them" (Swinney, Elder, & Seaton, 2010, p.3)

While Landrum (2011) holds the level of civility one experiences is subjective, the 'more serious' behaviors can generally be labelled. Alberts, Hazen, and Theobald (2010) continue by including the following behaviors:

1. Stalking;

2. Intimidation;

3. Cheating;

4. Unprovoked negative feedback;

5. Unjustified complaints the instructor's superiors;

6. And personal feedback attacking students or faculty.

Again, some may feel these behaviors may not apply to every asynchronous learning environment, but according to Clark (2010), all of these acts of incivility could be witnessed in an online course. These aggressive 'more serious behaviors' at times begin with less threatening acts but build up over time (Clark, 2008).

Many students do not see anything wrong with uncivil behaviors. Like consumers that have purchased a product from a store, students feel they are owed leniency or a high grade on assignments, because they have purchased a product called 'an education' from a university (Nordstrom, Bartels, & Bucy, 2009). Students feel education is the product; therefore, higher

education becomes a transaction and not an educational orientated process (Ausbrooks & Jones, 2011). This type of student is a consumer.

This consumerism worldview reduces education to a transaction. Students feel they have paid for the privilege to act a certain way (Nordstrom et al., 2009) and are owed something. Among these privileges students feel they have, according to Bartlett (2004), is that students expect good grades for substandard work, the right to blame the professor for not succeeding, and expecting the instructor to always be available. Baker, Comer, and Martinak (2008) state professors were seen as experts in their fields, but now they are seen as employees of the university where the student/consumers are buying a product.

With that said, Edmondson (1997) argues another student viewpoint similar to consumerism is one of entitlement where students believe they are privileged. Narcissism has been reported among finance students more than in other disciplines (Berman, Westerman, & Daly, 2010). A student's narcissism blinds them from the results of their action, not allowing them to see that their actions are viewed as offensive by others (Burke, Karl, Peluchette, & Evans, 2013). Using a survey tool, Nordstrom et al. (2009) found students that had a high narcissism score were more likely to be uncivil. Students attending part-time and identifying themselves as male were significantly more likely to be narcissistic and report themselves as acting uncivil than fulltime students either male or female (Nordstrom et al., 2009).

Faculty Incivility. Incivility as viewed by faculty perception in traditional residential courses is different than that of the students in residential courses. According to Baker et al. (2008), differences to what is seen as uncivil behavior can primarily be explained as a generational issue. Work ethics are seen to be much stronger with the generation known as the Baby Boomers, which make up most of the faculty in higher education, while those that make up

Generation X have an expectation of rewards through little effort (Baker et al., 2008). The challenge in the asynchronous environment, as Twenge et al. (2010) point out, is that faculty in an asynchronous learning environment have students mixed from four different generations.

Faculty can cause misbehavior in the class by seeming to be uncaring of the students in their course (Boice, 2000). Actions by the faculty member which can encourage the students to misbehave include arriving late, appearing to be cool or cold to the students, presenting material too rapidly, and surprising students with quizzes and inconsistent grading (Boice, 2000). These acts by faculty lead to squabbling with students and can cause "interpersonal conflicts in college classrooms … and significantly affect how faculty and students feel about a particular course" (Meyers, Bender, Hill, & Thomas, 2006). Wilson and Taylor (2001) state that the emotional environment fostered by a faculty member controls the course, and that environment is built upon the verbal and nonverbal communication given to the students.

According to Boice (1996), incivility may stem from a lack of training in higher education from administration to the faculty in an attempt to keep the institutions name from being tarnished. This lack of training may be an attempt to hide embarrassment over the instructor's ability to control the classroom environment (Boice, 1996) or to keep incidents of reported misbehavior lower (Swinney, Elder, & Seaton, 2010). Training, such as teaching methods, does help lower 'less serious' acts of incivility, including discussions and active learning in an attempt to decrease inattentive disruptions (Meyers et al., 2006). Additionally, the rapid growth of colleges and universities may require the use of less experienced, part-time graduate teaching assistants or lectures, because they do not hold the same respect as a full-time professor (Nilson & Jackson, 2004).

Alexander-Snow (2004) mentions that before the first class students have decided the teachers "competence, authority, and personable characteristics" (p.24) whether the faculty member demonstrations antisocial behavior or not. The instructor will have to use a positive working alliance with students (Tiberius & Billson, 1991) to overcome classroom conflict. A cooperative approach will benefit the classroom, as students are asked to take a larger role in their learning (Boice, 1996).

The modern educational design of the classroom has been moving from the faculty-lecture centered format to where the learners are the focus (Rovai & Jordan, 2004). To that end, students need clear instructions and timely feedback in online courses; otherwise, students will begin to feel frustrated and have a sense of anxiety (Hara & Kling, 2001). Boice (1996) continued that threatening to fail students, making condescending remarks, or making abrupt changes to the class will be seen as disrespectful to the students. For some researchers, the most likely reason why students are uncivil in class is because the faculty members fail to correct incivility (Boice, 1996; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying in online education is a form of incivility; however, some are more familiar with it as a student making online threats, being rude, or belittling others in a discussion format (Clark et al., 2012). Additional cyberbullying in a distance course may be a group excluding a student from their group project or sharing embarrassing information (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Lattanner, 2014), if the student was in a previous course. "Cyberbullying in university settings is similar in form and is perpetuated via the same platforms as cyberbullying in younger students (Cunningham et al., 2014, p. 3). Unfortunately, university students taking online courses may have lost their traditional support from their friends and

family and may attempt to build a new support system within the online university (Clark et al., 2012).

Interpretations of Incivility

Age and the individual's classroom status will have a bearing on whether the student is seen as disruptive or actively learning (Ausbrooks, Jones, & Tijerina, 2011; Frey-Knepp, 2012). Traditional "undergraduate students and male students are more likely to engage in uncivil behavior than their counterparts" (Swinney et al., 2010, p. 12). Indiana University (2000) reported a belief by their faculty that male students and undergraduate students were more likely to be uncivil in the classroom. Swinney et al. (2010) found that faculty and administrators in business and accounting courses agreed that male students and undergraduate students were more likely to be uncivil. Male students do not see challenging instructor authority as that because they have paid for an education they are owed good grades as being uncivil (Rowland & Srisukho, 2009).

Interestingly, Paik and Broedel-Zaugg (2006) found that undergraduate students in their fourth year no longer held that cheating was as uncivil a behavior as they did in their first year of college. Additionally, minority students were surprised and acted uncivil when a professor of the same race does not allow uncivil behavior (Hendrix, 2007). Likewise, faculty may not address student incivility because of high academic achievement (Barrett, Rubaii-Barrett, & Pelowski, 2010). Feldmann (2001) states that ignoring any behavior, even minor ones, over a period of time will lead any student to feel the behavior is condoned.

Academic level, however, has also been seen as an influential factor. While the acts of incivility, like cheating, were seen to no longer perceived as uncivil, Paik et al. (2006) studied graduate students and found that those students that have matured personally and professionally

influence civility in their profession. Cheating, according to Hardigan (2004), was decreasingly conducted by students in a professional academic program. Students began to realize the characteristics needed to be a student studying in certain professions.

The cooperative learning environment encourages civil behavior (Clark & Springer, 2007). Likewise, smaller class size sees more civil behavior, as the larger the classroom the more difficult it is to have cooperative learning, as Boice (1996) observed more than twelve of sixteen lecture classes had significant levels of incivility. Feelings of anonymity blossom in large traditional classrooms, as individuals more easily lose inhibitions (Diener, Lusk, DeFour, & Flax, 1980). Classrooms of over fifty students report more problems than smaller traditional classrooms by their instructors

Instructors in large and small learning environments and in different types of institutions may be able to identify incivility, but different instructors identify these acts of incivility and disrupting the classroom to different degrees (Burke, Karl, Peluchette, & Evans, 2013). Black, Wygonik, and Frey (2011) state most of the uncivil behavior seems to be reported by faculty in traditional required courses and are less likely in elective courses. Royce (2000) further narrows the focus of incivility in courses by explaining that this disruptive behavior happens more regularly in undergraduate than graduate courses.

There may be a reason for differing levels of perceived classroom incivility. Clark and Springer (2007) remind researchers that high stress learning environments may be the cause for acts of incivility. Swinney et al. (2010) found accounting faculty students acted more uncivil and aggressive than most other disciplines. Additionally, students in some professional fields do not see certain behavior as uncivil, such as failing to complete assignments in a timely manner and taking credit for someone else's work (Clark et al., 2012). Likewise, students in online

learning environments were deemed to be acting uncivil when they ask for special treatment or told their instructor what assignments they would do and when they would submit those assignments (Gailbraith & Jones, 2010).

Timing of assignments does seem to have some control as to when one can expect incivility. Students are reported to be more uncivil before and after the first two exams of a course and before and after deadlines for bigger assignments (Boice, 1996). These high stress times may also be linked to the instructor ignoring the instance, making the situation worse in the eyes of other students (Burke et al., 2013). A failure to take action, even during the few stressful situations, will diminish the instructors respect from students and may encourage others to act out (Bjorklund & Rehling, 2009).

Witnesses and Victims of Incivility

Gender of Faculty. When witnessing incivility, Clark and Springer (2007) found there was not a statistically significant difference on the basis of age for both faculty and students. "Younger and older respondents viewed the examples of uncivil behavior similarly" (p. 11). Rowland and Srisukho (2009) found faculty responses regarding incivility in the classroom to show "no statistically significant differences among responses according to gender or job status" (p. 123). Bell et al. (2010) did discover that full-time faculty perceived slack behavior as disrespectful.

According to Alexander-Snow (2004), classroom female faculty and minority faculty are challenged by students initially trying to challenge authority more frequently. Additionally, female faculty regard uncivil behavior more than male faculty does, seeing it as being more negative on the classroom environment (Lampman, Phelps, Bancroft, & Beneke, 2009). However, there was a "tendency for female faculty members to regard missing deadlines and

sleeping in class as uncivil behavior more than did male faculty" (Lampman et al., 2009, p.123). Alberts et al. (2010) mention that females are more likely to report 'more serious' incivilities than males.

Alexander-Snow (2004) states that Caucasian male faculty do not have to be aware of their cultural identities in the class room. Students view the typical or stereo-typical college professor as a mature, white male with a deep voice and commanding presence in the classroom (Nilson, 2003). Therefore, Caucasian professors face fewer challenges than minority professors in any course (Alexander-Snow, 2004).

The student course evaluations show they believe there is credibility in teaching, which males have over females (Rowland & Srisukho, 2009). Faculty members prodding students to achieve may be seen as hostile and argumentative, if they are a minority (Alexander-Snow, 2004). Boice (1996) concludes that incivility in the classroom of a minority teacher, especially a female one, will be part of the classroom experience, as students look to find balance with their concepts of power and knowledge.

Race. Minority faculty were less likely to respond (positively or negatively) with the uncivil behavior, thus perhaps ignoring incivilities, even though responding swiftly to minor incivilities is recommended (Barrett et al., 2010; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). Schneider (1998) states there is a link between classroom incivility and gender or racial diversity in the student body and faculty. Further, Burke et al. (2013) found that while race, gender, and faculty experience have little to do with student incivility in response to the faculty member, the instructor's teaching methods and attitudes do.

Preventive Strategies

The faculty member has the ability to lower stress in the classroom. Alberts et al. (2010) feel faculty can use informal communications to seem approachable and argue that giving praises to the students publicly is best. In the traditional classroom, the instructor can model professional behavior (Ausbrooks et.al, 2011). However, some researchers feel that just bringing up the topic of incivility during class and speaking about appropriateness of certain activities is sufficient to prevent uncivil acts (Black et al, 2011). These approaches create a positive perception in the minds of the students regarding the instructor's handling of incidents of incivility (Ausbrooks et al, 2011).

Likewise, clarifying expectations and conduct in the syllabus allows the students to understand the classroom norms (Ausbrooks et al, 2011). A classroom contract has even been discussed by Nordstrom et al. (2009), but developing a positive learning environment, using humor, and immediate feedback are just as important (Boice, 1996; Clark, 2009). Lastly, there has been a decrease in classroom incivility when the democratic process is applied by the instructor as it relates to what is perceived as happenings in the class (Brookfield, 1998).

The learning environment for students can be influenced by the instructor if the instructor varies his or her teaching methods, thus influencing a student's perception of the classroom (Stipek, 2002). Freeman, Anderman, and Jensen (2007) feel this makes the student's classroom experience more interpersonal, but are unsure if this type of climate creates a sense of belonging or if the individual's academic activity has more influence. At the freshmen level students are now travelling a different academic path than that at the secondary education level because of a physical separation from support groups and former ways of life (Freeman et al.,

2007). Consequently, newer university students may begin to imitate others in the educational environment, if those observed gain their desired outcome (Burke et al., 2013).

Therefore, the way the institution and faculty react to acts of incivility has a bearing on the perceived level of competence by the students, as a whole (Burke et al, 2013). Overall, educational institutions set the norms for the school and in general for the classroom. Connelly (2009) finds it is necessary to institute campus-wide codes of civility, as students enter higher education. The code of civility should be included in the orientation and in freshman level courses (Connelly, 2009). However, Bell, Rahman et al. (2010) state that students perceive incivility about at the same levels whether or not there is a code of conduct. Burk et al., (2013) state that it is not *if* there is a code of conduct at the university but *how* the university uses the code to diminish acts of incivility.

In preparing to educate students there are a few areas that need to be understood in relating to university students. First, students in elementary and secondary schools have parental involvement when discussing civil behavior in class, which means that university students might resist parental involvement and it would make the program less effective (Williford et al., 2013). Secondly, there may be a legal component in the civility education, as university students may now be considered an adult (Cunningham et al., 2014). Next, minor incidents of incivility may not require legal action, but they may affect one's grades and have an influence upon the career one is aiming to achieve (Roberto, Eden, Savage, Ramos-Salazar, & Deiss, 2014). Lastly, the university needs to balance its responsibility in creating a safe and supportive learning environment with debate, free speech, and peer critique (Cunningham et al., 2014).

Barrett et al. (2010) argues that educating the students and faculty may be an effective means of increasing civil classroom behavior. These materials could be discussed with incoming

students at orientation and in required courses and the faculty should be trained in seminars

about ways to recognize and deal with different situations (Burke et al., 2013). Lastly, faculty

should look to their pasts as students and use that which they may have witnessed, which seems

to create a more civil environment (Brookfield, 1995). Unfortunately, online courses are quite

different in their presentation to students and some of these methods may be limited.

Students do perceive actions by others in the classroom as disruptive, even though what

may be seen as uncivil behavior by one instructor is not seen as disruptive by another (Bjorklund

& Rehling, 2010). Clark et al. (2012a) however, found that these disruptions in the learning

environment were perceived to be milder by the students than by the instructor. Bjorklund and

Rehling (2010) state that one approach administration and faculty might take is targeting those

that happen most frequently, which may not be the ones that are the most serious as they happen

less frequently or rarely. This includes behaviors by the instructor which are perceived to be

uncivil, as more students feel that faculty are likely to engage in uncivil behavior (Clark et al.,

2012). As faculty and students perceive incivility in the classroom differently, general education

about what is civil and uncivil actions in the classroom might help (Barrett et al., 2010).

Unfortunately, there are instances that acts of incivility will need to be responded to, as

prevention strategies will not prevent all classroom disruption. In most cases of minor acts of

incivility, a swift response is recommended (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). Some methods of

dealing with the uncivil behavior include speaking to the disruptive individual in front of the

class, speaking to the entire class about the behavior, or joking about the disruption (Ausbrook et

al., 2011; Royce, 2000). Royce (2000) also mentions that ignoring the uncivil behavior had been

used by greater than 50% of the faculty; however, it is seen as a less effective way to deal with

acts of incivility. While these methods are public and might serve to educate the students about

classroom norms and accepted behavior, these reactions are seen as less effective, too (Alberts et al., 2010).

Meyers et al. (2006) found that when speaking to the disruptive student it is best done outside of class in a respectful and warm attitude. The type of responses given by instructors seems to be demographically linked. Alberts et al. (2010) found female faculty was more likely to use a wide range of responses, while minority faculty may ignore uncivil behavior (Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). The problem with disruptive behavior in an online course is that other than communicating to a student via electronic method, it is difficult to seem warm and interested in the student without them providing the instructor with a phone number.

Demographically speaking, students wish to be corrected or have others corrected in different ways, as well. In the United States, students prefer indirect methods which include emails, other private communications, or talking to the class as a whole (Ausbrook et al., 2011). In Japan, students feel minor acts of incivility like coming to class late should be ignored; however, talking in class and being more disruptive should be met with immediate verbal warnings (Burrell, 2009). Lastly, female students in the Middle East by an overwhelming margin want the instructor to scold and correct the student (Al Kandari, 2011).

Sense of Community

Definition. McMillian and Charvis (1986) state a sense of community is a "feeling that members have a belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p.9). A sense of community is not quickly formed (Bellah et al., 1985). Bellah et al. (1985) continue by stating a sense of community is defined by past memories and a history together as a group. A community is shared interests (Rovai, 2002a), not geographic space. In asynchronous learning

the memories or history needs to be built upon what people do and not upon where they interact (Rovai, 2002a).

As previously mentioned, Hersch (1998) states civility in the classroom becomes less civil as students become more socially isolated. Rovai and Jordan (2004) continue that asynchronous learning requires cooperation and group learning as the tools in overcoming isolation. Unfortunately, distance learning has removed many of the non-verbal communication, which can make attempts to form a community more difficult (Kerka, 1996). When students miss non-verbal cues in distance learning environments, misunderstandings affect the learning environment negatively (Rovai & Jordan, 2004).

Bates (1995) reminds the educational community that early asynchronous learners were limited to those needing to learn for the sake of their job, those in the military whose deployments interfered with traditional education, or those students needing to complete advanced training. The modern incarnation of distance learning has evolved into allowing anyone to become a student (Kerka, 1996). Collins (1999) states students and faculty have a variety of emotions going into a course, and these range from fear to enthusiasm. In the asynchronous learning environment, if a student is passive or unwilling to participate with the community, the student can foster tension in the rest of the class (Morrissette, 2001). When this happens, students have disrupted the learning community and classroom environment, which may lead to students with-drawing from the class or the school (Elder et al., 2010).

Thus, Rovai (2002a) emphasizes that classroom interactions will come about because of a greater sense of community. In order to build a sense of community, Schmidt and Baker (2011) argue that students need to go into any academic environment with the mindset of a global citizen. Students should use diverse ethical thinking and diverse responses when responding to

other students (Schmidt & Baker, 2011). Classroom communities bring with them many benefits, such as better classroom adjustment, a support system, social connectedness, and an ability to reach goals that are outside of their own aspirations (Rovai & Wighting, 2005).

A stronger sense of community allows for collaborative learning, which is seen by Ng (2001) as a benefit when students have a shared goal and can relate. However, the use of technology as the classroom or as the meeting ground for the classroom community as opposed to being used in a traditional classroom needs to be better understood. Rovai and Wighting (2005) state that any learning framed within a social context is a feature which constructions knowledge and creates "ideal learning environments" (p. 100) instead of just transferring knowledge. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) state any community and learning in educational environments are learner-centered, knowledge-centered, assessment-centered, and community-centered.

Hiltz (1998) earlier found that the extensive use of computers in the classroom had the potential of harming the classroom through the loss of social connection and ultimately the students' sense of community. Likewise, Rovai, Baker, and Cox, Jr. (2006) state that traditional students score higher than online students when measuring a school's community. However, there are no "…differences in school community and perceived learning among on-campus and online students…" (Rovai et al., 2008, p. 13). Each classroom community is unique, as face-to-face classrooms are located in different geographic locations, with different mixes of students and different ages, and focusing on different topics. Therefore, Hill (1996) asked that study be conducted into different settings, as Hill (1996) hypothesized the sense of community was different in distinct settings.

The general sense of community in the United States has been in decline, as only one in eight young people feel they have a responsibility to others, to participate in the betterment of the general public, or to be corrected (Etzioni, 1993). This individualism held by the young people extends to the classroom. Additionally, the design of the course can further influence the student's sense of community by limiting the dialogue and interaction or demonstrating the benefits of working together in order to learn (Rovai, 2002a). However, Royal and Rossi (1996) disagree and suggest student's engagement in activities sponsored by the school is directly related to the student's sense of community. Being active at school and thus building one's sense of community becomes harder to do when the student is physically separated from the school, as an asynchronous learner is (Royal & Rossi, 1996).

Initially, students in distance learning courses need to be self-regulated and independently motivated (Abrahamson, 1998). However, if the feelings of isolation are not overcome, the student may drop out of the course or program (Hara & Kling, 2001). The lack of a sense of community makes students in asynchronous learning environments feel disconnected (Kerka, 1996). Unlike traditional or face-to-face classes physical distance may contribute to dropout rates (Rovai, 2002a). However, a sense of community in traditional classrooms may be an illusion (Cook, 1995). If the student allows their sense of community to be defined by their lack of involvement with on campus activities, then this can lead to isolation, low self-esteem, and harm their motivation to learn (Gibbs, 1995). "Learning is assisted if students believe that they belong to a community or group that makes up a class…" (Wighting, 2006, p. 371).

However if there is a feeling of community in a course, then Freeman, Anderman, and Jensen (2007) state that it is unclear if an individual which feels a connectedness to one class can or will transfer that feeling to another course or to the university, as a whole. The teachers

approach in class effects the student's sense of community regarding "warmth and supportiveness, emphasis on prosocial values, encouragement of cooperation, and elicitation of student thinking" (Freeman et al., 2007, p. 206). In addition, McNeely, Nonnemaker, and Blum (2002) found that good behavioral management supported by respectful interactions are based upon the instructor's guidance. Unfortunately, instructor interactions with students begin to decline in quality and support after junior high school (Clinchy, 2002).

Different communities promote continual interaction with students and the instructor, learners taking an active role in their education, the removal of classroom competition, and beneficial feedback given in a prompt manner (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). The resulting sense of community a student feels in a learning environment "develops as a result of joint work of instructors and students" (Shea, Li, & Pickett, 2006, p. 176). Shea et al. (2006) state that not only should the classroom community consider current viewpoints but should also consider views that are seen as alternative in order to have a community-centered classroom. Sfard (1998) points out that there needs to be flexibility in what one sees as learning as the traditional concept of accumulating knowledge has become a "…member of a certain community. This entails, above all, the ability to communicate in the language of this community and act according to its norms…From a lone entrepreneur, the learner turns into an integral member of a team" (p.6).

The sense of community one has in an asynchronous learning environment is built upon the interactions one has between the student-instructor and student-student (Palloff & Pratt, 1999). According to Kramarae (2003), an understanding of gender in distance learning courses needs to be taken into consideration, as asynchronous courses have been considerably marketed to women. When looking at asynchronous learning, "gender and power differences are

constructed, and to ignore the ways that gender is under construction online is to ignore many difficult experiences of real people (Kramarae, 2003, p. 269). Likewise, when building a sense of community, collaboration in the online course is important, and women create this in an asynchronous environment through their communication style (Palloff & Pratt, 1999).

Communication styles vary between the genders in online classes (Rovai & Baker, 2005). Rovai (2001) and Blum (1999) found individuals, even when they feel they are anonymous in online discussions, speak with gender voices. Male voices tend to be more independent in spirit, which means more impersonal language, and the female voice is more connected, which is supportive and helpful (Rovai, 2001). Knowing there is a difference between the preferred learning styles of men and women, it may be that men with independent voices and less likelihood to encourage collaborative learning are in turn more likely to report lower levels of learning, as they are less connected to the online classroom (Rovai & Baker, 2005). Rovai and Baker (2005) also found that when men knew their gender was outnumbered in the class they tended to participate less in classroom discussions.

However, being anonymous and not knowing even the gender of the other classmates in an online course may cause an increase of stereotypical behavior (Rovai & Baker, 2005). According to Rovai and Baker (2005), computer-mediated communication frees one from following public norms and allows a more "us versus them" behavior. In order to counter this behavior, Palloff and Pratt (1999) suggest defining norms for the online classroom and allow students to resolve classroom disputes. Unfortunately, allowing students to resolve their own issues may be difficult, as a demographic majority will have an effect on the minority (Rovai & Baker, 2005).

African-American Community. Little, if any, research specifically examining incivility at the community level has occurred with respect to the African-American demographic. Flannery (1995) states that African-Americans rely upon community learning or the collaborative learning processes, which is more easily done in face-to-face classrooms. This was corroborated by Rovai and Wighting (2005), which found African-Americans had a lower sense of the social and learning communities, when African-American students are in predominately Caucasian online courses. To that end, the classroom should have activities that improve a student's experience, which build a sense of community (Rovai & Wighting, 2005). These activities create an intimate environment and increase the learning community's ability to bring others into the group (Berman, 1997).

Christian Community. Little, if any, research specifically examining incivility in a Christian university has been conducted; however, the sense of community at a Christian university has a few studies. Rovai (2002b) suggests that values held by individuals may bring those groups together, thus making connections within a greater community. Rovai and Baker (2004) compared a public institution and a Christian institution in regards to the sense of community, finding that in both online and face-to-face courses, the Christian university had a higher sense of community. Christian universities attract those holding Christian values, which would promote a sense of community (Rovai, 2005). Pazmiño (1997) initially stated that fellowship and community are a part of the Christian experience. Christian education

> includes the processes of training, instruction, and nurture, which enable persons to grow
> and mature in their faith…The Christian virtue most closely but, again, not exclusively
> associated with education for community is that of love…Love as a virtue relates most

closely to the temporal dimension of the present, with a focus on maximizing the

potential of each current situation and interaction (Pazmiño, 1997, pp. 47-48).

Rovai et al. (2008, p. 3) state that "Quality Christian education goes beyond learning in the

cognitive domain, that is, it goes beyond the simple transmission of content knowledge. It

includes moral and spiritual development, character, and other relatively intangible goals such as

the…sense of community."

Connectedness

Rovai and Jordan (2004) define connectedness as "the feelings of students regarding their

cohesion, community spirit, trust, and interdependence" (p. 6). Cohesion in a group setting, such

as a classroom, is defined as "the strength of the bonds linking individuals to the group, feelings

of attraction for specific group members and to the group itself" (Forsyth, 2006, p. 14).

Community spirit is a feeling of friendship, cohesion, and bonding that develop among learners

(Rovai, 2002a). Rovai (2002a) also states that without trust, the classroom is based only upon

the instructor and formality, lacking the needed continual diverse interactions that develop

learning. Lastly, interdependence in a group setting is defined as the distribution of resources

that define the work and how the group members complete the current work (Wagner, 1995).

Therefore, connectedness is based upon the current level or strength of bonds, feelings of

attraction, friendship, the degree one uses another's abilities to complete a task, and trust.

Connectedness is distinct from one's sense of community, as a sense of community is

defined by past memories and a history together as a group (Bellah et al., 1985). Connectedness

is how one feels in the present within a group. Rewards one earns upon completion of assigned

work can demonstrate connectedness (Wagner, 1995). So, communities are eventually built by

connectedness, as connectedness brings together the feelings of community (Rovia, 2002a).

Learning

Learning ties together the interactions of the students "as they purse the construction of understanding and the degree to which members share values and beliefs to which educational goal and expectations are being satisfied" (Rovai, 2002a, p. 201). However, incivility inside a learning environment demonstrates a disregard for others and runs against community norms (Porath & Pearson, 2004). Hirshy and Braxton (2004) state less time is spent learning when students are exposed to uncivil behavior. Therefore, uncivil behavior that students experience is a violation of their student's rights (Schmidt & Baker, 2011).

Cultural differences in learning environments can challenge an educator in a diverse classroom. As mentioned previously, Rovai (2002a) feels classroom interaction builds a sense of community in the classroom. This sense of community helps to foster learning, as the students are looking to tie together the values and beliefs of learning. However, civility differs in varying cultures because what is civil or polite differs in each culture (Schmidt & Baker, 2011).

Schmidt and Baker (2011) explain that creating a learning community is difficult, because of the cultural diversity institutions are trying to get and the availability asynchronous learning offers. The more a student becomes isolated or feels isolated, the less the student is tolerant of others (Schmidt & Baker, 2011). As intolerance in a classroom grows through acts of incivility, the feelings of detachment to the learning environment grow (Forni, 2002). Morrisette (2001) states that students are then short-changed when the learning environment has to deal with uncivil behavior.

Cultural problems can also go over into the interaction with classroom faculty. Stork and Hartley (2014) found that Chinese students expect faculty to demonstrate civility through competent and dignified behavior, while American students expect an engaging learning

environment, mutual respect, and an opportunity to learn. However, the differences expected in learning environments are not just based upon cultural differences or based on race, but also on cultural differences based on gender. In the same study, it was found that American women perceive uncivil behavior by faculty to be more serious than American males, but male Chinese students see incivility as a greater offense than Chinese females (Stork & Hartley, 2014).

The earlier discussed study regarding a sense of community at a Christian University and a public institution touched on areas of learning. According to Rovai et al. (2008), learning is both actual and perceived. Learning styles are defined by the ethos of the school. Eisner (1994) states the ethos is the "underlying structure of a culture, the values that animate it, that collectively constitute its way of life (p. 2). Rovai et al. (2008) explain the ethos of state universities, which is to create professionals that achieve a mastery of the content and methodologies. Students "develop an understanding of human behavior, society, and culture with specific attention to a worldwide perspective on issues related to gender, race, and ethnicity" (Rovai et al., 2008, p. 13). However, Rovai et al. (2008) continue to state the goal of the Christian university is to produce professional "who acknowledge the centrality of Jesus Christ in all things" (p. 13), seeking to serve others. Sasse (1998) believes students will gravitate towards the school that matches their desired community ethos. This, then, explains Rovai et al. (2008) findings that the perceived learning each group feels they have received is not that different.

Theoretical Framework: Group Development Theory

Definition. Group development theory focuses on the process of how individuals come together in order to meet a common goal or purpose. A group is defined as associations between two or more individuals with similar attributes and having a sense of community (Adnan,

Akram, & Akram, 2013). Thus, the theory of group development focuses upon "the overcoming of obstacles to valid communication among the members" (Bennis & Shepard, 1956, p. 416) within the group. Bennis and Shepard (1956) state the progress of these groups relies upon their ability to uncover methods for attaining consensus. Tuckman (1965) states that the method initially used to discover a way of attaining consensus is through testing, while Bennis and Shepard (1965) describe this process more as the handling and distribution of power within the group.

Again, Bennis and Shepard (1956) remind the researcher that in order to build a working theory of group development, the researcher needs to identify the internal obstacles to valid communication which are "common to and important in all groups meeting under a given set of environmental condition" (p. 416). In other words, the preferences each has in aligning themselves with authority and personal intimacy. The first of these obstacles is leadership and the second is the orientation towards the other members of the group (Bennis & Shepard, 1956). Earlier, Schultz (1955) felt that these two dimensions were also vital to the productivity of a group as it demonstrated compatibility.

In resolving the aspects of authority (dependence) and personal intimacy (interdependence) within the group, Bennis and Shepard (1956) state that the obstacles to authority include rebelliousness, submissiveness, or withdrawing in response to authority figures. Likewise, destructive competitiveness, emotional exploitation, etc. will interfere with the interaction of intimacy among the peers of the group (Bennis & Shepard, 1956).

Bruce Tuckman initially proposed his model to the theory in 1965, after synthesizing 50 different studies in order to describe the stages of group development. During this period of understanding small groups, Tuckman (1965) noted that there were four stages to this linear

progression. These stages to Tuckman's Theory of Group Development were *Forming*, *Storming*, *Norming*, and *Performing* (Tuckman, 1965). In 1977, Tuckman added a fifth stage, *Adjourning*, to the theory (Tuckman, 1977) after an evaluation of additional studies were made available.

Tuckman's model is based upon two constructs, interpersonal relationships and task behaviors. The first stage, forming, is based upon interpersonal relations, specifically testing the boundaries and becoming dependent on other members (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007). During this phase, Tuckman (1965) states that the individual is testing the boundaries of their behavior. This phase is also when a leader in the group is established (Tuckman, 1965).

The second stage, storming, is characterized by group and individual conflict (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007; Tuckman, 1965). Interpersonal issues become the center of activities and there is great resistance to completing tasks and bowing to group influences (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007). Overt and covert conflicts regarding leadership, tasks, and group structure will emerge (Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Bennis and Shepard (1956) feel that without a strong individual to provide some movement in the early stages then the group "movement may be retarded indefinitely" (p. 427).

Norming, the third stage, begins to show signs of group cohesiveness, as standards for the group begin to form (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007). At this point individuals in the group begin to have feelings of belonging and that issues within the group can be solved (Engle, Boozer, Cessar, & Correia, 2003). Group members begin to express personal opinions and how they see work being completed (Adnan et al., 2013). The expression of one's opinion towards work begins to demonstrate the groups movement towards the tasks needed to be completed (Tuckman, 1965).

The performing stage tasks are being completed and consensus with high morale (Adnan et al., 2013). The roles group members take on are flexible in nature, allowing for the group to be functional (Tuckman, 1965). Engle et al. (2003) point out that conflict is accepted, solved in a manner of openness during this stage. The group's goals and their completion become the focus of the group's energy (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007).

The final stage is called adjourning, in which the tasks are completed, the group is dissolved, and the individuals terminate their roles (Glowacki-Dudka & Barnett, 2007). Tuckman and Jensen (1977) state that due to the possibility of hurt and loss by some individuals in the group, some try to avoid the formality of the adjourning step. Additionally, there may be some in the group that take destructive actions, such as completing the remaining work of the group without any input from others (Engle et al., 2003). This is usually a final attempt by an individual as being seen as the leader, or the only person doing the work. On the other hand, some individuals become happy over completing the assignment for which they were tasked (Adnan et al., 2013).

Link to Academic Courses. In an educational environment, a class is a group of learners that have come together to meet the goal of an education in a certain topic (Engle et al., 2003). When the students of a course come together, a student's interaction with other students will become beneficial and overcome feelings of isolation (Brown, 2001). These interactions need to be planned by the design of the course, moving students through the different stages of group development in order to build a sense of community and learning (Engle et al., 2003). The group of students creates a community of leaners.

The development of a group or community of learners not only helps the student but the institution, as well (Engle et al., 2004). The individual feels less isolated and the institution thus

may lower their dropout rates. Wegerif (1998) felt the student's perceived level of inclusion in the group would be the gauge by which the course could be measured. The greater the meaningful interaction with other students the individual had, then greater the learning which took place, as these students would be exposed to many different perspectives (Wegerif, 1998).

According to Glowacki-Dudka and Barnett (2007), each of the stages of Tuckman's model for group development is evident in online adult courses. Discussion forms, for example, help students introduce and become involved with each other during the forming stage, if introductions are a part of the course design early in the course (Tubbs, 1995). Additionally, Engle et al., (2003) mention that as the group transitions from one stage to the next the discussion boards can become more complex requiring good communication skills in an open-ended process. However, time constraints in an online learning setting may help groups move through the *storming* portion of stages in a relatively short time (Johnson et al., 2002), thus limiting conflict.

Link to Incivility. Group development theory mentions that conflict will be a part of the process and developing the sense of belonging. Students will organize in the classroom, taking on the group's norms (Tuckman, 1965). Likewise, literature states developing clear communication among the individuals in the learning community is essential to a student's learning (Engle et al., 2003). Both clear communication and classroom results can be hindered by the group stagnating in the early development stage (Bennis & Shepard, 1956).

There are many acts of incivility that can take place in Tuckman's model. For example, possible uncivil interruptions of group development in the classroom according to Adnan et al. (2013) include: 1) Forming stage- poor listening, negligible involvement, and apathy and 2) Storming stage- arguments and inconsistency. However, other possibilities in later stages

include faculty creating a false consensus to norms by ignoring behavior in order to move

through this stage (Hubbell & Hubbell, 2010), specifically in the norming stage. The false sense

of progression made between the instructor and those acting in an uncivil manner will only prove

to further prevent the group from being able to enter the performing stage.

As the acts of incivility are decreased morale becomes higher, assignments are completed

with input from all, and less destructive behavior overall are witnessed (Adnan et al., 2013).

Adnan et al. (2013) continue by stating that the students will be happy over their

accomplishments and thus will remain focus to the end of the course. The student's perception

of where the group ends will translate to how he or she viewed the acts of incivility witnessed in

the course. If students make it to the performing stage, they will see early conflict as minor, as it

help them achieve their learning goals (Engle et al., 2003). The opposite would also be true. If

students do not feel they learned or belonged, then they will not have made it beyond the

storming stage.

Summary

Throughout the review of literature on incivility in the classroom, there has been common

themes. First, students in traditional classrooms experience incivility to different degrees. These

variations of interpretation may be due to gender, race, and age. Additionally, students, as a

whole, view incivility in the traditional classroom differently than faculty. However, viewing

incivility by students aimed at the faculty member may be influenced by race of the instructor.

Secondly, faculty can affect the experience students have in the classroom by making

expectations clear, having an orientation before the class starts, and encouraging collaboration.

This all should be done before and during the class, reinforcing a safe environment. If the

faculty ignore uncivil behavior in the classroom by students, then it is seen as condoning the

activity. However, if a minority instructor does not allow an uncivil behavior by the student of the same race, then the students viewing the correction may feel better about the instructor but the student that was corrected may display more serious acts of incivility.

Student can also affect the traditional classroom environment, depending on the viewpoint the student maintains in the course. Many students have begun to view the classroom as an educational transaction with the instructor as just an employee. Other students see themselves as privileged or above the other students and feel they have special rights and privileges the other students and the faculty member must acknowledge. Also, acts of incivility will increase if students feel isolated.

While some of the acts of incivility committed by students and instructors do translate into the asynchronous learning environment, such as asking for more time for assignments, asking for a change of grades, challenging the instructor's knowledge, and providing slow feedback; there is a lack of literature about incivility's impact on the educational process for online students, as a whole. Also, there is a lack of literature regarding the relationship of online act of incivility witnessed by students and the sense of community these distance learners have for the online course. Likewise, few, if any, studies examine incivility in online classrooms in which the course is one that is required by all students. As there is a wider variety of students in a required course, it is unknown the extent to which the student's sense of community will be impacted. Likewise, most studies have only examined public institutions rather than Christian private universities, so the fact that these students attend a private religious university influence may affect the student's sense of learning or connectedness, as they seemingly are already a part of a community.

This study builds upon the work Clark and Springer (2010); Clark et al. (2012a); and Bjorklund and Rehling (2010, 2011) began when investigating the uncivil behavior witnessed by students in the online learning environment. The research gap is the effect academic incivility has on the educational process for online students (Clark & Springer, 2010) and students outside of an undergraduate nursing completion (Clark et al., 2012a). This research also investigates online incivility in a private university, on the eastern side of the United States, and examines courses that are required, which is a request Bjorklund and Rehling (2010, 2011) made. More specifically, the university is also Christian. Lastly, one of the two instruments being used, the IOLE survey, will have been used in order to build its validity, as it is a new instrument.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Design

A correlational design will be used with this research, collecting and analyzing data from a convenience sample of undergraduate students taking an online government course titled GOVT 200 "Constitutional Government and Free Enterprise" and GOVT 220 "American Government." A correlational design will be used in order to show if the variables of uncivil acts (predictor) and a sense of community (criterion) have a positive or negative relationship. The correlational design will be used, as a relation is being researched, the researcher will be collecting two scores from a single group at a single point in time, and no attempt at a predicting future performance is being made (Creswell, 2008).

Research Question

The following research question is proposed:

RQ1: Is there a relationship between undergraduate students' sense of incivility and their sense of community while taking an online course at a large private Christian university?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are proposed:

H_01: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of community* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H_02: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of learning* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H$_0$3: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of connectedness* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

Participants and Setting

The participants for the study will be a convenience sample of on-line undergraduate students selected from a Christian university located in central Virginia during the spring semester of the 2014-2015 school year. The university's online program is available in an asynchronous option comprising of on-campus students and students mostly throughout the United States. The university is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, master's, education specialist and doctorate levels (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2014).

The sample was chosen by the researcher, because of the researcher's professional relationship as an adjunct faculty member at the university. The study included 56 government online courses. The introductory courses were GOVT 200 and GOVT 220. GOVT 200 is a required introductory course for distance learning undergraduate students, entitled "Constitutional Government and Free Enterprise," providing the student with three semester hours of credit. GOVT 220 is a required introductory course for distance learning undergraduate students, entitled "American Government," and providing the student with three semester hours of credit. GOVT 200 is a prerequisite for GOVT 220, but both general education courses offered to the student population at large. The total sample size was $N = 129$, which was above the needed number of undergraduate students for medium effect size with a statistical power of .7 and an $\alpha = .05$, which was 66 (Gall et al, 2007, p. 145). The study included a total of 84 females and 45 males after outliers and incomplete surveys were removed. Also, 92 undergraduate

students self-identified as being Caucasian/Non-Hispanic, 17 as African-American, five as

Hispanic, two as Asian, one as Native American, and 12 as more than one race. The participants

were invited to the study via an email from the researcher and sent through the Government

Department's course registrations. The invitation was sent out at the end of week six of an eight

week course.

Instrumentation

There will be two instruments used in this study, the *Community Classroom Scale* and the

Incivility in Online Learning Environments Survey.

Community Classroom Scale

The first instrument for this study is the *Community Classroom Scale* developed by Rovai

(2002b) and will be administered electronically through Qualtrics. Permission to use this

instrument free of charge was granted through contact with the developer (Alfred Rovai,

personal communication, April, 2014). See Appendix A for Instrument. The instrument was

created to measure the evolving sense of community in future research, as well as, assist in

evaluating changes made in the classroom delivery system to eliminate feelings of isolation

(Rovai, 2002b). The *Community Classroom Scale*, has been used frequently since its

development (e.g. Shea, 2006; Baturay & Bay, 2010; Top, 2012),

The purpose of the *Community Classroom Scale* was to measure a student's sense of

community based upon connectedness and learning in a five-point Likert-type survey. The

constructs of community as defined by Rovai (2002b) are connectedness which brings an

individual a sense of belonging and obligation to another in the group, and learning, as part of

the obligation is to meet the needs. Learning is the purposeful interactive process of

transformation between members of a classroom in which educational needs are being met

through active participation (Rovai, 2002b). The survey consists of 10 questions of connectedness and 10 questions of learning, totaling 20 questions. Connectedness will be calculated by the odd numbered questions, and learning will be calculated by the even numbered questions. Questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, and 19, are positively worded, using the following scoring scale: strongly agree=4, agree=3, neutral=2, disagree=1, strongly disagree = 0; and questions 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, and 20, are negatively worded, using the following scoring scale: strongly agree=0, agree=1, neutral=2, disagree=3, strongly disagree=4. From each of the two sets of totals, the overall total can range from 0-80, as each construct can have a total of 0 - 40 points (Rovia & Whiting, 2005). The odd question numbers focus on connectedness, and the even questions focus on the learning subscale (Rovai, 2002b). The higher the score in each section, the more connectedness or sense of community the student feels. The odd numbered questions related to connectedness and the even numbered questions related to learning. The instrument was scored by the researcher and will take no more than 15 minutes to complete per the instrument developer.

Rovai (2002b) used both Cronbach's coefficient and the split-half methods to analyze for reliability. As the scores were similar, the Cronbach's Alpha will be reported. The overall sense of community had a Cronbach's Alpha .93, while the constructs of learning and connectedness were .87 and .92, respectively (Rovai, 2002b).

Incivility in Online Learning Environments Survey

The *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* is the more recently developed of the two instruments. There has not been any published work using this tool outside of the published work describing the *Incivility in Online Learning Environments*' development, which describes the validity and reliability of the tool (Clark et al., 2012). There are many tools currently used to

measure workplace (Workplace Incivility Scale) or face-to-face classroom incivility (Student

Classroom Incivility Measure), but there has not been any tool developed to measure incivility in

asynchronous learning. The instrument was developed to meet the needs of measuring the

unique characteristics of classroom behavior at a distance that relies mostly on written

communication, as the other tools measured verbal communication and acting-out behaviors.

The purpose of the *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* is to measure the student's

perception of incivility in the online classroom. The *Incivility in Online Learning Environments*

has been reviewed by three expert distance professors for content validity, readability, and

logical flow and has had a pilot-test conducted (Clark et al, 2012a). The use of the *Incivility in*

Online Learning Environments in this study will be used to help to build its validity.

The *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* will be used to measure the perceived

regularity of each activity. The instrument was adapted to meet the requirements of this study

with its developers understanding (Cindy Clark, personal communication, April 2014). See

Appendix A for permission to use and the license agreement. The student-answered portion of

the survey would only be used, the time period that was examined was changed from 12 months

to 8 weeks, and the final qualitative answers will be omitted. For scoring purposes a score of

1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; and 4=Often. None of the instruments' questions have been

reversed by the author of the instrument. The survey consisted of 18 questions set up on a

Likert-type scale. Each statement in the *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* had a

possible score ranged of 18-72. The lower the total scores, then the less likely uncivil behaviors

are observed in the online course. The instrument was scored by the researcher and the section

being used should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. See Appendix B for the

instrument.

The content validity for the *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* survey was evaluated by a research team of three experts and pilot tested with 31 students and seven faculty. The instrument examines both behaviors of faculty and students. While this study only used the student portion, it should be noted that the IOLE was found to have a Cronbach's Alpha of .987 (Clark, Werth, & Ahten, 2012a). However, the faculty portion held a Cronbach's Alpha of .982 while the student portion had a Cronbach's Alpha of .960 (Clark et al., 2012a).

Procedures

The researcher began the study by obtaining permission to conduct the survey from University officials. Qualtrics Survey Software is require by the university to be used when conducting studies with their students, so the researcher utilized Qualtrics. This includes setting up the account and conducting the required training. See Appendix F for the permission letter from the Dean.

The research consultant's review was completed before the IRB application was submitted. The IRB application was then completed within five working days of the defense of the research proposal. The IRB then reviewed the application and carbon copied the Dean for the school of government, for any changes. The IRB approval from the university was obtained. See Appendix G for approval.

Once the permissions and training for the Qualtrics Survey Software, was completed, the researcher logged in to Qualtrics and created the survey using the *Community Classroom Scale* and *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* instruments. Before each section in which an instrument was put the instructions for each tool was typed. See Appendixes C & D to view these instructions. When survey construction was completed, the invitation email created by the researcher.

Upon the approval from administration, the invitation email was sent to all students in GOVT200 *Constitutional Government and Free Enterprise* and GOVT220 *American Government*, inviting each student to use the Qualtrics link during weeks 6-8 of the respective course. See Appendix E for a copy of the letter of consent. To assist with the dispersion of the emails, the faculty coordinator was contacted and the invitation emails were sent to each student with the list the faculty coordinator provided. A follow-up email was sent to the faculty members instructing the GOVT200 and GOVT220 courses, asking that they remind their students about the survey by posting the reminder in the "Announcements" section of the course.

Upon completion of the fifth week, the students were emailed the invitation for the survey which would be open for weeks 6 – 8. After the student has decided to participate in the study and clicked on the hyperlink in the email, the first page will restate the invitation and consent to participate found in the original email (see Appendix E), and the student will click a "yes" or "no" response for their consent to participate. If the student clicked "no", then the student is taken to the exit page of the survey. If the student clicked "yes" giving their consent, then the student will be taken to the second page of the survey.

The second page of the survey asks the demographic questions regarding the participant's current class status (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior), gender (Male/Female), age (under 18, 18-20, 21-23, 24-25, over 25), and ethnicity. Additionally, there was a space for the participant to type in their student Identification number. This number is what was used to randomly pick the winner of the tablet mentioned in the invitation. The student clicks the 'next' button for the next page. The student was required to complete this page before the next page will display.

The survey began on page three with the Classroom Community Scale's twenty questions. The instrument's instructions were listed at the top of the page. These questions were

broken into five groups of four questions to make the survey readable (See Appendix C). The student clicks the 'next' button for the next page. The student was required to complete this page before the next page will display.

Upon completion of the third page of survey questions, the student was taken to the forth page of questions. The forth page had instructions listed at the top of the page describing how to complete the Incivility in Online Learning Environment's twenty questions. These questions were broken into four groups of five questions to make the survey readable (See Appendix D). The student clicks the 'next' button for the next page. The student was required to complete this page before the next page will display.

The fifth page was the exit page. This page thanked the participant for their time and stated their responses were saved. The participant now can close the screen. Specific options were chosen to make sure the participant could not take the survey multiple times. After week eight ended, the survey was closed.

After the survey was closed, the researcher will log into Qualtrics.com. In order to download the survey results into SPSS® the researcher clicked the "View Results" tab, selected the survey created for this study, and click "Download Data". The information was then transferred electronically to SPSS®. The researcher then logged out of Qualtrics.com.

Analysis

Each null will be tested using a Pearson Product Moment analysis. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS® to compile the raw data from the survey results. The study of correlation requires that the overall score of the Incivility in Online Learning Environments survey be calculated for each participant. Additionally, an overall score of the Community Classroom Scale will be calculated. To test for the remaining null hypotheses, the subcategories

of the Community Classroom Scale instrument, learning and connectedness, will need to have their individual scores calculated for each participant. The data will then be entered into SPSS® to have the Pearson's r will then be calculated. The alpha level will be .02 to reject the null hypotheses using a Bonferroni correction from an initial .05. The Pearson Product Moment analysis is designed to test the relationship between two continuous variable. The Pearson Product Moment analysis allowed the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the predictor variable and each one of the criterion (Gall et al., 2007).

Before conducting the analysis, the researcher screened the data for errors and inconsistencies. Then the following assumption tests were run. An **Assumption of Bivariate Outliers:** A scatter plot using the predictor variable (x) and the criterion variable (y) will be used to check for outliers. After creating the scatter plot, outliers will be checked for, as they will be outside the standard deviation. Outliers will not be kept, if they are in fact outliers and not data entry errors, in which case the data will be corrected. An **Assumption of Linearity:** A scatter plot using the predictor variable (x) and the criterion variable (y) will be used to check for linearity. Additionally, the direction of the line drawn through the data will be examined. If the line is found to go up from left to right of the scatter plot, then the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables was positive. However, if the line is found to go down from left to right of the scatter plot, then the relationship between the predictor and criterion variables was negative. An **Assumption of Bivariate Normal Distribution:** A scatter plot using the predictor variable (x) and the criterion variable (y) will be used to check for bivariate normal distribution. An oval or cigar shape of the data on the scatter plot will indicate if the assumption of homoscedasticity was tenable. Additionally, a line will be able to be drawn through the center of the data points, indicating the assumption of linearity was tenable.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

This study explored the relationship between online classroom incivility and a students' sense of community in the online learning environment. This chapter presents a summary of the participants and the survey data obtained through a survey questionnaire. The results of the correlational study address the research question stated.

Research Question

RQ1: Is there a relationship between undergraduate students' sense of incivility and their sense of community while taking an online course at a large Christian university?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were proposed:

H_01: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of community* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H_02: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of learning* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

H_03: There is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of connectedness* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university.

Descriptive Statistics

Population and Sample

The participants in this correlational study consisted of students in two general studies courses. These courses were offered twice in the fall semester of 2015 in a total of 56 sections, and each course was eight weeks. The survey questionnaire was a web-based survey. There were 146 original surveys started, with 133 surveys completed. Initially, there were six possible surveys that could be deemed as outliers. However, standardized deviations were calculated for each of the elements of the CCS variables, and those with at least two of the elements more than two standardized deviations away were removed. Thus, there were four surveys that were found to be outliers, as they were greater than two standardized deviations. After removing the outliers, there were 129 complete data sets used in this research. There were no distinguishing designations made between the two courses of students. The final N used for statistical analysis was 129 surveys.

The median score for the *Incivility in Online Learning Environments* (IOLE) was 20, with a possible score range of 18-72. The lower the total scores, the less likely that uncivil behaviors were observed in the online course. The median scores for the Classroom Community Scale (CCS) was 52 for the overall score, 23 for connectedness, and 29 for learning. From each of the two sets of totals, the overall total can range from 0-80, as each construct can have a total of 0-40 points (Rovia & Whiting, 2005). The higher the score in each section, the more connectedness or sense of community the student felt. The higher the overall CCS score, the greater the sense of community felt by the student.

Ethnicity

The descriptive statistics of the demographic variables are presented in Table 1. Approximately 71.3% of the respondents were White/Caucasian ($N = 92$). Additionally, 13.2% of the respondents identified as African Americans ($N = 17$); 3.9% identified as Hispanic ($N = 5$); 1.6% as Asian ($N = 2$); and .7% as Native American ($N = 1$). The remaining respondents identified themselves as White/Caucasian and Hispanic; White/Caucasian and African American; Native American and African American; and Hispanic and African American, or Other. This meant those identifying as more than one race or Other was 9.3% ($N = 12$).

Age and Grade Level

Approximately 17.1% of the respondents were between the age of 18-20 ($N = 22$), 10% were between the ages of 21-23 ($N = 13$), and 7.8% were between the ages of 24-26 ($N = 10$). However, 65.1% of the respondents were over 26 years of age (n=84). The respondents were identified as 20.15% freshmen ($N = 26$), 20.15% sophomore ($N = 26$), 30.01% juniors ($N = 40$), 26.4% seniors ($N = 34$), and 2.3% Graduate ($N = 3$). This information is shown in Table 1.

Gender

Of the respondents 65.1% identified as female ($N = 84$) and 34.9% identified as male ($N = 45$). These descriptive statistics for the study variables are listed numerically on Table 1 and Table 2 lists the *Mean* and *Standard Deviation* scores on the surveys based on Gender. The range given for the Incivility Online Learning Survey (Clark et al., 2012a) is 18–72. The mean score was utilized of all analyses in this study. The mean was 21.37 ($N = 129$, $SD = 3.53$). The male participants had a mean score of 21.49 ($N=45$, $SD = 3.70$), and the female participants had a mean score of 21.31 ($N = 31$, $SD = 3.46$).

The Classroom Community Scale (Rovia, 2002b) consists of two subscales. The mean score of each were used in the analyses. The overall mean score for the Classroom Community Scales (CCS) 52.83 ($N = 129$, $SD = 13.15$) on an overall scale of 0-80. The Learning subscale had a mean of 29.68 ($N = 129$, $SD = 6.43$) on a scale of 0–40. The male participants Learning mean score was 30.09 ($N = 45$, $SD = 6.04$), and the female participants Learning mean score of 29.46 ($N = 84$, $SD = 6.65$). The mean of the Connectedness subscale was 23.15 ($N = 129$, $SD = 7.69$) on a scale of 0 – 40. The male participants Connectedness mean score was 23.62 ($N=45$, $SD = 7.51$), and the female participants Connectedness mean score was 22.89 ($N = 84$, $SD = 7.81$). This information is shown in Table 2.

Table 1

Gender, Ethnicity, Age Range, and Class Level

Demographic (*N*=129)	Categories	Frequency	% of Total
Gender	Male	45	34.9
	Female	84	65.1
Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	92	71.3
	African American	17	13.2
	Hispanic	5	3.9
	Asian	2	1.6
	Native American	1	.7
	Multiple/Other	12	9.3
Age	18-20	22	17.1
	21-23	13	10
	23-26	10	7.8
	Over 26	84	65.1
Class in School	Freshman	26	20.15
	Sophomore	26	20.15
	Junior	40	31
	Senior	34	26.4
	Graduate	3	2.3

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation for Survey Scores

	M	*SD*	*N*
IOLE– Overall Score	21.37	3.53	129
Male	21.49	3.70	45
Female	21.31	3.46	84
CCS– Overall Score	52.83	12.15	129
Male	53.71	12.53	45
Female	52.36	13.52	84
CCS- Learning Score	29.68	6.43	129
Male	30.09	6.04	45
Female	29.46	6.65	84
CCS–Connectedness	23.15	7.69	129
Male	23.62	7.51	45
Female	22.89	7.81	84

Results

Null Hypothesis One

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to test the first null hypothesis: there is no significant relationship between *incivility* and a *sense of community* for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university. The (*N*) for this null hypothesis was 129. Preliminary analyses showed that the assumptions of normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). In the scatterplot (see Figure 3), a

negative relationship exists due to the relative increase in the Y axis and the relative decrease in the X axis. Also, a best fit line can be drawn through the scatterplot, which signifies a linear relationship. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to measure the relationship between the total score for of the IOLE survey (M = 21.37, SD = 3.53) and the total score of the CCS survey (M = 52.83, SD = 12.15). The test showed a significant correlation, as the *P*-value of 0.00001 was $\leq$ the Bonferroni correction level at .02 (Table 3). Since the absolute Pearson's *r* value was just under .5 at .389 and was negative, it showed a negative medium relationship between the two variables. In conclusion, there was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and that the students perceived level of incivility in the online classroom does affect the students' sense of community.

Figure 1. *CCS Overall Score Distribution*

Figure 1. The above histogram shows a normal population distribution.

Figure 2. *IOLE Overall Score Distribution*

Ranges - IOLE Total Scores
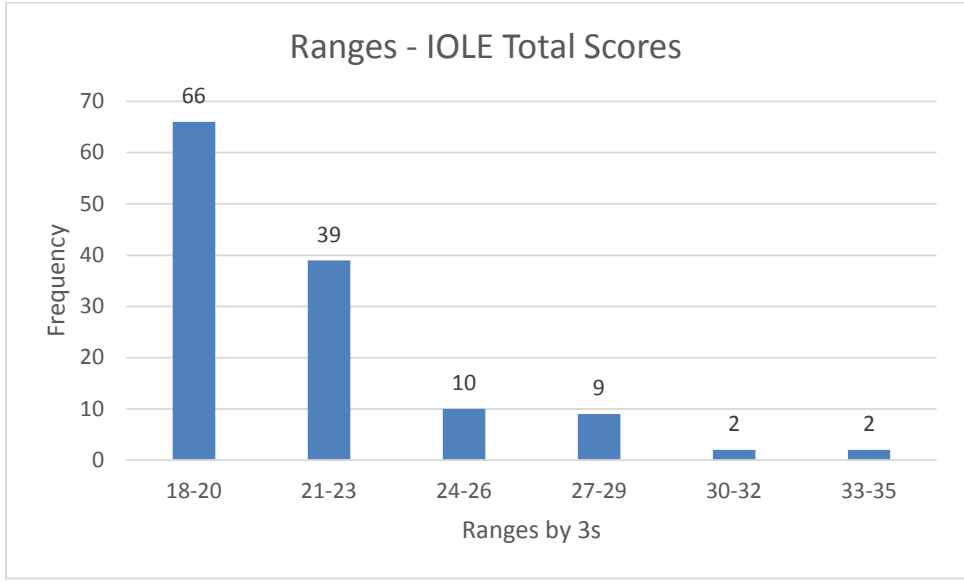
Figure 2. The above histogram shows a positively skewed population distribution with a non-zero because a natural limit prevents outcomes to be less than 18.

Figure 3. *Scatterplot of overall scores for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Classroom Community Scale*

$R^2 = 0.1942$

Figure 3. The above scatterplot shows a negative linear relationship between a student's scores for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Classroom Community Scale.

Table 3

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and Overall CCS Survey Scores

		IOLE Overall	CCS Overall
IOLE Overall	Pearson Correlation	1	-.389[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.389[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=129

Null Hypothesis Two

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to test the second null hypothesis there is no significant relationship between incivility and a sense of learning for undergraduate students taking an online government course at a large private Christian university. The (*N*) for this null hypothesis was 129. Preliminary analyses showed that the assumptions of normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity (see Figure 2 and Figure 4). In the scatterplot (see Figure 5) a negative relationship exists due to the relative increase in the Y axis and the relative decrease in the X axis. Also, a best fit line can be drawn through the scatterplot, which signifies a linear relationship. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to measure the relationship between the total score for of the IOLE survey (*M* = 21.37, *SD* = 3.53) and the learning score of the CCS survey (*M* = 29.68, *SD* = 6.43). The test showed a significant correlation, as the *P*-value of 1.9E-05 was $\leq$ the Bonferroni correction level at .02 (Table 4). Since the absolute Pearson's *r* value was just under .5 at .367 and was negative, it showed a negative medium relationship between the two variables. In conclusion, there was significant

evidence to reject the null hypothesis and that the students perceived level of incivility in the online classroom does affect the students' sense of community.

Figure 4. *CCS Learning Scores Distribution*

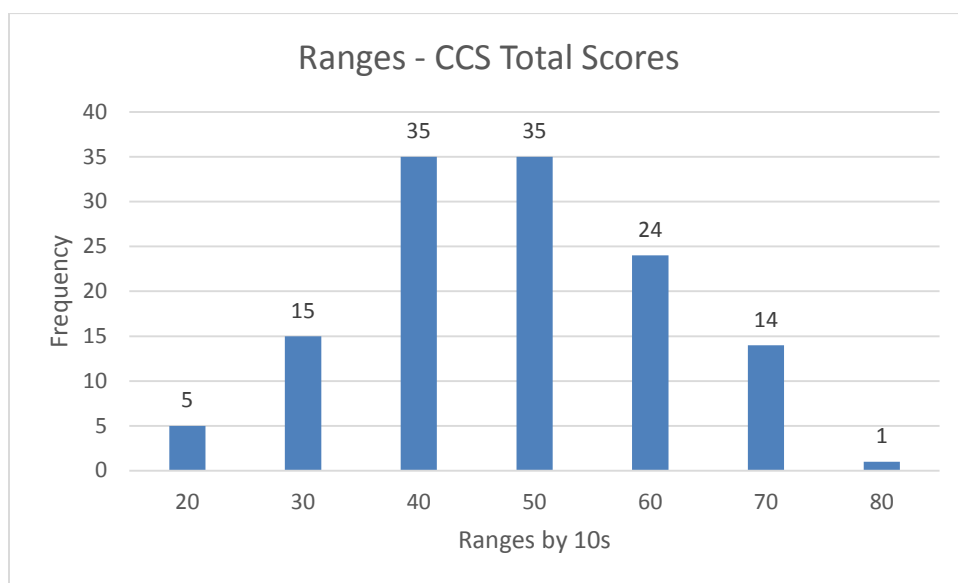**Ranges - CCS Learning Scores**
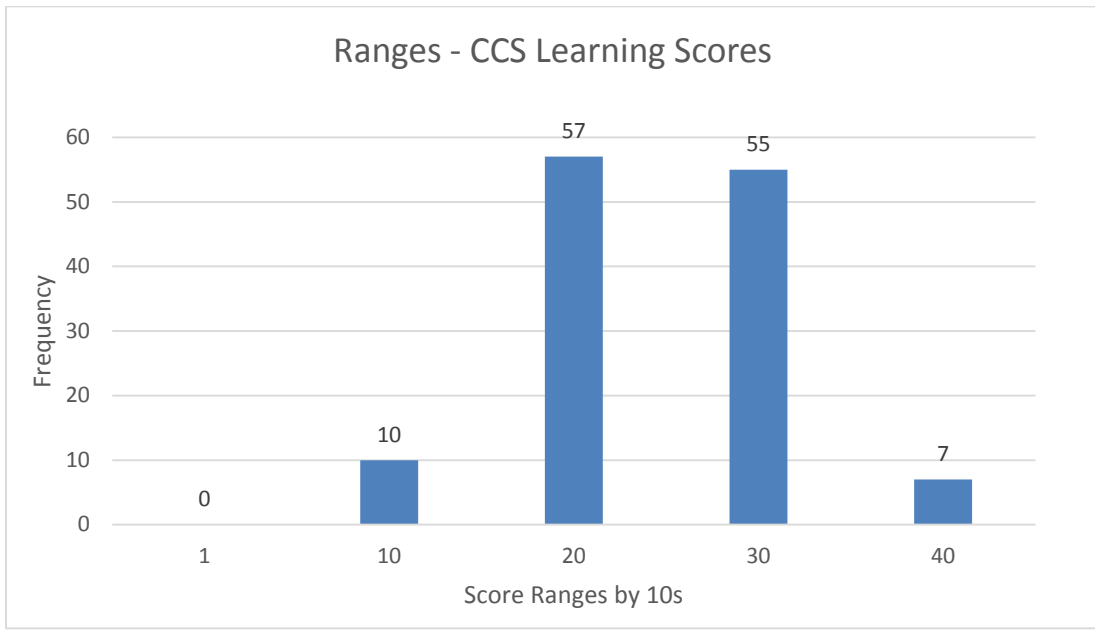
Figure 4. The above histogram shows a normal population distribution.

Figure 5. *Scatterplot of overall score for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Learning portion of the Classroom Community Scale*
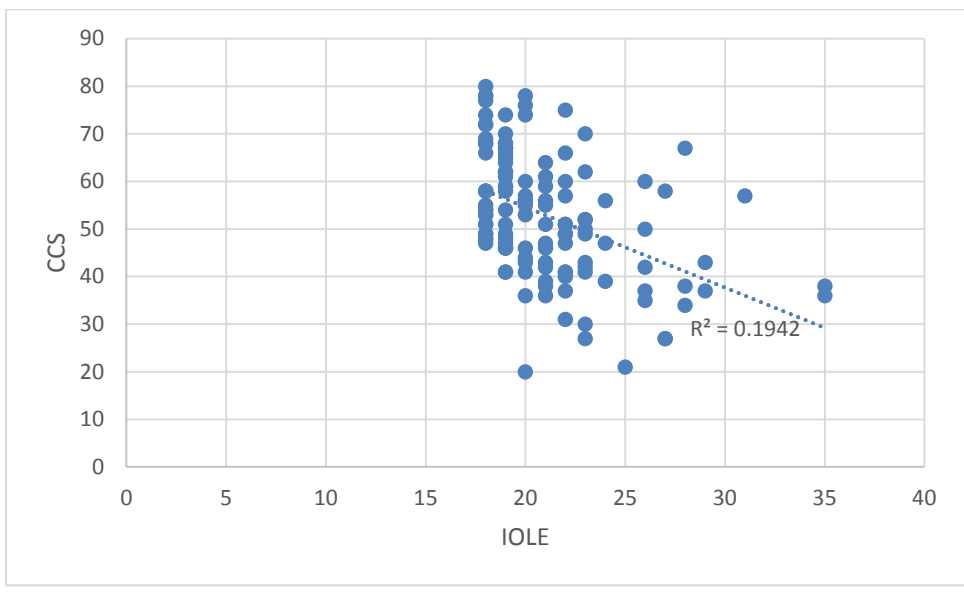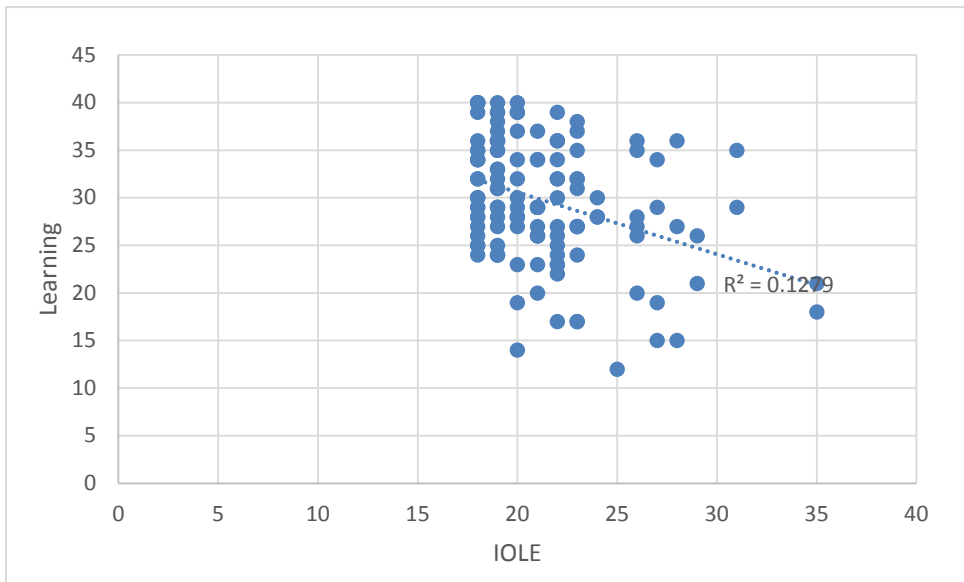
Figure 5. The above scatterplot shows a negative linear relationship between a student's scores for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Classroom Community Scale' Learning portion of the survey.

Table 4

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Learning Portion

		IOLE	Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.367**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.367**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=129

Null Hypothesis Three

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to test the third null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between incivility and a sense of connectedness for undergraduate students taking an online general education course at a large private Christian university. The (*N*) for this null hypothesis was 129. Preliminary analyses showed that the assumptions of normality, linearity, or homoscedasticity (see Figure 2 and Figure 6). In the scatterplot (see Figure 7), a negative relationship exists due to the relative increase in the Y axis and the relative decrease in the X axis. Also, a best fit line can be drawn through the scatterplot, which signifies a linear relationship. The Pearson-product moment correlation coefficient was calculated to measure the relationship between the total score for of the IOLE survey (*M* = 21.37, *SD* = 3.53) and the connectedness score of the CCS survey (*M* = 23.15, *SD* = 7.69). The test showed a significant correlation, as the *P*-value of 3.1E-05 was $\leq$ the Bonferroni correction level

at .02 (Table 5). Since the absolute Pearson's *r* value was just under .5 at .358 and was negative, it showed a negative medium relationship between the two variables. In conclusion, there was significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis and that the students perceived level of incivility in the online classroom does affect the students' sense of community.

Figure 6. *CCS Learning Scores Distribution*

Ranges - CCS Connectedness Scores
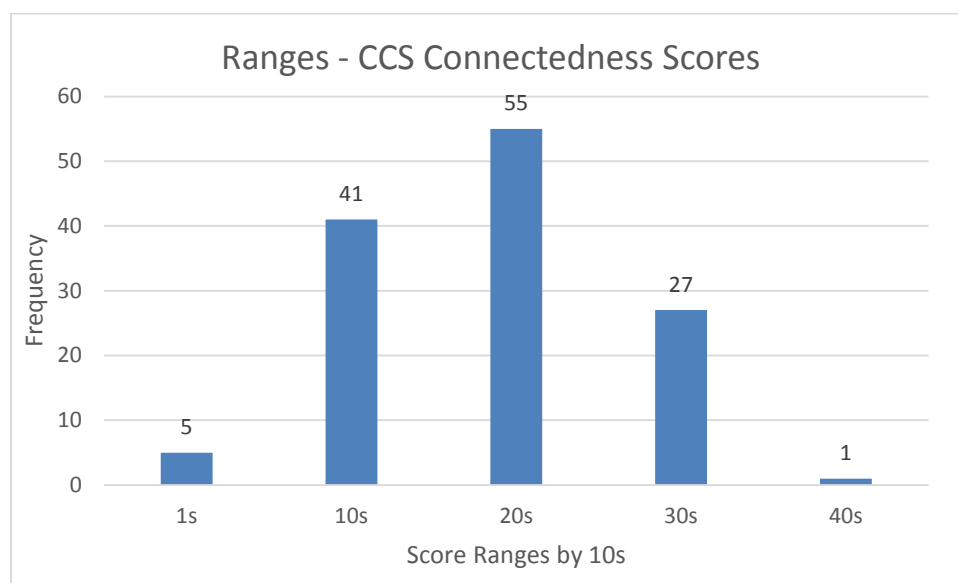
Figure 6. The above histogram shows a normal population distribution.

Table 5

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Connectedness Portion

		IOLE	Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.358**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.358**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=129

Figure 7. *Scatterplot of overall score for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Connectedness portion of the Classroom Community Scale*
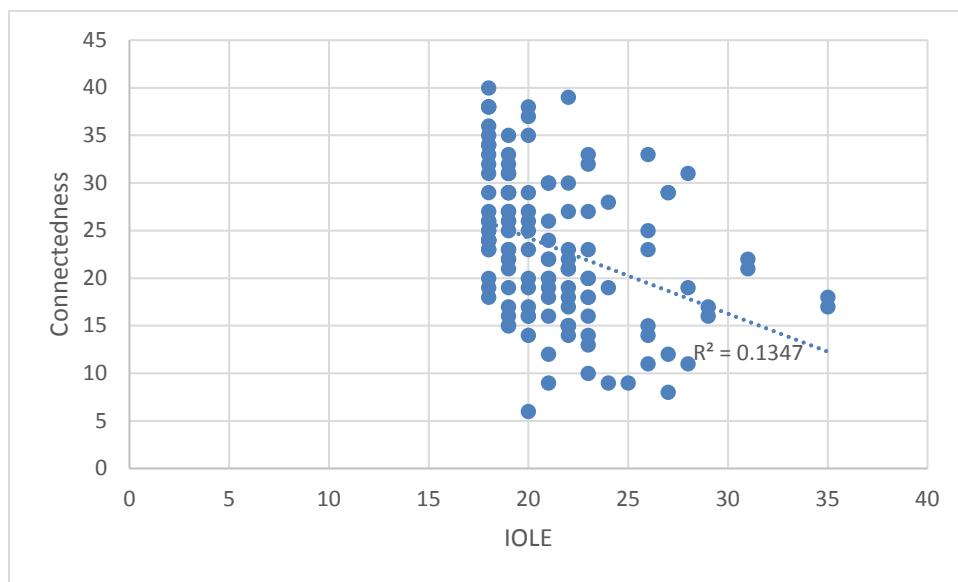
Figure 7. The above scatterplot shows a negative linear relationship between a student's scores for Incivility Online Learning Environment and the Classroom Community Scale' Connectedness portion of the survey.

Additional Analysis

The research showed that the null hypotheses for all three questions needed to be rejected, when examining the students as one group. These outcomes then were looked at by breaking down the students into the different demographics to see if these outcomes were maintained. Table 1 has been posted in this section to restate the numbers from each demographic. What was found was that when analyzed at the class level, only the freshmen show a correlation. The freshmen had a high degree of correlation at .542 with more than 20% of the population with a Pearson's critical value of .453 at .01 for a two-tailed.

While the sophomore, junior, and senior classes did not meet the critical value at .01 under Pearson's, their critical values were close to the correlational coefficient calculated at .01. This being the case, the *P*-value for the sophomore, junior, and senior classes was calculated.

The sophomore class had a *P*-value of .002, the junior class a *P*-value of .0441, and the senior

class a *P*-value of .0163, which gave the probability the null hypotheses should be rejected in all

three. As a closer look was needed to understand this analysis, Spearman's Rho was calculated

for the classes, and it was found that the absolute value for the sophomore class was .576, which

was above the Spearman's *R* critical value of .501. The junior class was not over the critical

value of .405 with a calculated absolute Spearman's *R* value of .3199, and the senior class had a

critical value of .421 with a calculated absolute Spearman's *R* value of .3924. In order to show

significance, the level for the two-tailed test had to be taken outside of this study's parameters to

.05, as seen in Table 6. The graduate students were not included, as *N*=3.

Table 1

Gender, Ethnicity, Age Range, and Class Level

Demographic (*N*=129)	Categories	Frequency	% of Total
Gender	Male	45	34.9
	Female	84	65.1
Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	92	71.3
	African American	17	13.2
	Hispanic	5	3.9
	Asian	2	1.6
	Native American	1	.7
	Multiple/Other	12	9.3
Age	18-20	22	17.1
	21-23	13	10
	23-26	10	7.8
	Over 26	84	65.1
Class in School	Freshman	26	20.15
	Sophomore	26	20.15
	Junior	40	31
	Senior	34	26.4
	Graduate	3	2.3

Table 6

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Based on Class Level

Freshman		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.542**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.542**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

N=26

Sophomore		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.392*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.392*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.048	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N=26

Junior		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.381*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.015
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.381*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N=40

Senior		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.355*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.040
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.355*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N=34

As further examination was done based upon the student's age range, there was only a correlation in one age group. The number of students in the age range 26+, *N*=83, allowed for a test of significance at the critical value .256. The age range 26+ showed a significant correlation at .01 for a two-tailed test for all three research questions. All other age ranges had an *N* ≤20, leaving a large effect size. Table 7 gives the correlation significance.

Table 7

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Based on Age Range

26+		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.3799**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.3799**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

26+		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.392**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.392**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

26+		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.327**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All above tables *N*=83

The next demographic to be examined was ethnicity. For many of the same reasons listed for the study of age ranges, the ethnicity analyzed was Caucasian. The number of students listing themselves as Caucasian was N=92, allowed for a test of significance at the critical value .242. The ethnicity Caucasian showed a significant correlation at .01 for a two-tailed test for all three research questions. All other age ranges had an $N \leq 17$, leaving a large effect size. Table 8 gives the correlation significance.

Table 8

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Based on Ethnicity

Caucasian		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.444[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.444[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Caucasian		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.425[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.425[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Caucasian		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.409[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.409[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
All above tables N=92

The last demographic which was analyzed was that of gender. Gender, unlike ethnicity and class level, did have enough of each gender to conduct a correlational test. For the female students, the *N*=84 and the male students, *N*=45. For both genders all three of the null hypotheses could be rejected. The critical values were .256 for the female gender and .358 for the male gender. Table 9 gives the results of the correlations based upon the female gender and Table 10 gives the results of the male gender. The level of correlation is higher for the male gender.

Table 9

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey & CCS Survey Based on Female Gender

Female		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.346^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	$-.346^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Female		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.313^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	$-.313^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Female		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	$-.332^{**}$
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	$-.332^{**}$	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All above tables *N*=84

Table 10

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey & CCS Survey Based on Male Gender

Male		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.479[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.479[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Male		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.452[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.452[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Male		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.436[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.436[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
All above tables *N*=45

As both of the genders showed a level of significance above the critical value, along with the grade level of freshman, age range of 26+, and the ethnicity of Caucasian; the researcher analyzed the correlation for both male and female students based on most of the above criteria. As filtering the participants by grade level dropped *N* to levels in the single digits, the grade level freshman was not included in the filtering. The 26+, male, Caucasian students had an *N*=23, and the 26+, female, Caucasian students had an *N*=37. This made the 26+, male, Caucasian students had a critical value of .482, and the 26+, female, Caucasian students had a critical value of .381. Upon analyzing both groups the 26+, male, Caucasian students had a significant correlation for

all three of the null hypotheses. There was a correlation for the 26+, female, Caucasian students

in the null hypotheses for Overall and Learning. The 26+, female, Caucasian students

technically had a weak negative correlation, when calculating Pearson's *r* for the first null

hypothesis. Still, when the *P*-value was calculated, the *P*-value was 0.017334, which was not

significant at $p < 0.01$. The third null hypothesis was accepted as there was not a correlation until

the significance level was calculated at .10, which was outside the study's significance level.

Only the Pearson's *r* values are shown in Table 11 and Table 12.

Table 11

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Based on 26+, Male, Caucasian Students

Male		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.609**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Male		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.635**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.635**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

Male		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.516**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.516**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

All above tables *N*=23

Table 12

Correlations for the Overall IOLE Survey and CCS Survey Based on 26+, Female, Caucasian Students

Female		IOLE	CCS Overall
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.389**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.389**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Female		IOLE	CCS Learning
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.431**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Learning	Pearson Correlation	-.431**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Female		IOLE	CCS Connectedness
IOLE	Pearson Correlation	1	-.302***
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
CCS Connectedness	Pearson Correlation	-.302***	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.10 level (2-tailed).

All above tables *N*=37

The last analysis that was conducted was to compare Clark, Werth, and Ahten (2012a) results to this research in regards to the IOLE instrument. While this was not a primary focus of this research, one of the purposes was to use this instrument to increase its validity and evaluate its questions. Upon examining the figures from the original study (Clark et al., 2012a) and this study the researcher found that this study's most perceived uncivil behaviors were quite different than those of Clark et al. (2012a). The results showed what Clark et al. (2012a) listed as the most frequently experienced acts of incivility were some of the least frequently experienced acts

of incivility in this research. These acts are examined in more specific terms in the Discussion

portion of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

This study was conducted to see if there was a correlation between acts of incivility in the online classroom and the student's perceived level of a classroom community at a Christian university. The participants were in one of two online undergraduate general education courses. These courses were taught in the fall 2015 semester at a large private Christian university. The Classroom Community Scale (Rovia, 2002b) was used to calculate the students' perceived level of community. According to Rovia (2002b), community is comprised of a student's perceived levels of learning and connectedness.

To measure the classroom environment, the Incivility Online Learning Environment Survey was used and the Classroom Community Scale was utilized to measure the student's sense of community. While the Incivility Online Learning Environments survey can measure student and faculty perceptions, this study was solely conducted from the students' perspective. Therefore, the design of the research instrument was modified to examine students only. The research question and the three null hypotheses are discussed, as well as, the conclusions, limitations, and recommendations for future research.

Pearson product-moment correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the Classroom Community Scale, which measured a student's sense of community, and the Incivility Online Learning Environment, which measured a student's sense of incivility in their online course. The test results indicate that there is a moderate negative correlation between a student's sense of community and the student's sense of incivility in their online course. The lower the sense of community, the higher a student's sense of incivility in the course was. When examining the two components making up the students sense of community, which are learning

and connectedness, there was a slightly higher negative relationship between classroom incivility score and the student's perceived learning score than between classroom incivility score and the student's perceive connectedness score.

Research into incivility in the classroom has for the most part focused on face-to-face interactions in the classroom. However with the yearly growth of the student population in online courses, the unique environment to which these students educate themselves needs to be researched. The online course lends itself to the independent student (Abrahamson, 1998), but also to those that are looking for a less expensive alternative to traditional courses. As a result, the online learning environment tends to be a more nontraditional mix of students.

The study was designed to look at students in lower level general studies courses, but the age range for the students was at the high end. There are usually younger students in the traditional face-to-face courses in college, as most graduate by the time they are 23. While Dabbagh (2010) points out that the "profile of the online learner population is changing from one that is older, mostly employed, place bound, goal oriented, and intrinsically motivated, to one that is diverse, dynamic, tentative, younger, and responsive to rapid technological changes" (p. 224), more than half of the students in these courses were 26 years or older.

While a correlational study cannot be used to represent a population, the researcher was surprised when the overall demographics of the participants was similar to some of the current national figures. The age range of students taking online courses nationally is above 66% for those 25 years of age or older, according to Clinefelter and Aslanian (2015). The study is in agreement with this number as over 65% of students in these courses were over the age of 26. Likewise, the racial makeup of the study, 71.32% Caucasian and 13.18% African American,

seemed to follow the national numbers for online undergraduate students of 71% Caucasian and 11% African American (Clinefelter & Aslanian, 2015).

This study built upon the work Clark et al. (2012a) and Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) began at public universities, but differences were found, when examining the overall outcomes of the research. As mentioned in the last chapter, this research and that conducted by Clark et al. (2012a) had different acts of incivility seen as more frequent. More mild acts of incivility were perceived by the participants in this study, taking Clark et al. (2012a) top three acts of more extreme incivility to the bottom of this researcher's list. The research Clark et al. (2012a) conducted showed male students made up 16%, and female students made up 84%, and the age range was 22-58 years of age. Clark et al. (2012a) had 90% of the participants as Caucasian. In comparison, this research had male students make up 34.9%, female students make up 65.1%. When the two highest age categories are combined, this research had a 23+ age group 72.9%, N=94. Lastly, this research had Caucasians make up 71.3% of the participants.

The fact that the age of the participants for this research is slightly lower than Clark et al. (2012a) was to be expected, as those participants were in a baccalaureate completion program for RNs. Likewise, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2010) found the demographics of RNs to be females 90.1% and 78% Caucasian, which are similar to Clark et al. (2012a) demographics. Therefore, the demographic information is not outside of what would be expected for both sets of research at the upper and lower course levels.

As stated earlier, Rowland and Srisukho (2009) found responses regarding incivility in the classroom to show "no statistically significant differences among responses according to gender..." (p. 123). As both genders show a statistically significant correlation in this research, the researcher also feels perceived incivility based on gender to be similar with public and

private institutions. Additionally, Clark and Springer (2007) found there was not a statistically

significant difference on the basis of age as "Younger and older respondents viewed the

examples of uncivil behavior similarly" (p. 11). Therefore as those 26+ years old showed a

statistically significant correlation in this research, the researcher can deduce that the other ages,

if a minimum number of participants in the other age ranges would have been meet, would have

also shown similar levels of perceived incivility. Therefore, the researcher also feels perceived

incivility based on age to be similar with public and private institutions.

Again, this research was set at a large private Christian university and the course level

were general studies. Clark et al. (2012a) was set at a public university in the Northwest and in

an upper level of a baccalaureate completion program. While students were not asked about

their religious preferences in this research, the label of Christian university was given in this

research due to the fact that all faculty at the university understand that "fidelity to the historic

Christian faith is a necessary and fundamental commitment of teachers..." (Faculty handbook,

2015, p.42) and the faculty must demonstrate "…a model of biblical lifestyle, character, and

relationship in every aspect…" (Faculty handbook, 2015, p.6). As the instructor is seen as the

authority in the classroom, the environment created by the instructor is what influences the

classroom (Nilson, 2003); (Stipek, 2002). Therefore, the instructor's Christian modeling creates

a Christian classroom environment.

The survey questions, for the most part, showed a correlation across ages and genders;

however, grade levels and race were the exceptions. Caucasian students show a correlation, but

when students classified as minorities are combined together, there is no correlation. This was

an outcome that was expected, as Alexander-Snow (2004) points out that different minorities

view acts of incivility differently. Asian, Hispanic, African American, and Native American students all have a different perception as to what is considered uncivil in the classroom.

It should be pointed out that the overall Median and Mean scores of the IOLE were 20 and 21.37, respectively. As mentioned earlier, the lower the score on the IOLE, the less likely acts of incivility were perceived. The range for the IOLE survey was 18-72, which by either measurement would indicate few acts of incivility were perceived by the participants. Another possibility is that the IOLE instrument may not have acts of incivility that are easily perceived over electronic communications, requiring the participant to admit to breaking classroom rules. Some of the questions included cheating and asking for extensions on assignments. As the IOLE also has a qualitative portion asking the student to list other acts of incivility not named, the researcher feels the later possibility is unlikely, as the behaviors would have been discovered. The research done by Pazmiño (1997) and Rovai et al. (2008) seems to bear out the perceptions of Christian classrooms.   The process of learning for each student is in maximizing their potential and that is accomplished through a community of love (Pazmiño, 1997). Rovai et al. (2008, p. 3) state that a sense of community is developed when a moral and spiritual component is added to the classroom. As the Mean and Median scores are within the first 10% of the overall possible score, incivility seems to be an infrequent happening during the study at this Christian university.

To bear out this point, Clark et al., (2012a) assert that online nursing students found incivility to be a mild to moderate problem. This is because the online learning environment (OLE) may "…be more superficial and more emotionally charged than those in a face-to-face setting…the perception of uncivil behavior in an OLE could be lowered expectations regarding course interactions and a more detached attitude" (Clark et al., 2012a, pp. 154-155). This would

imply that Clark et al., would expect to see an infrequent to mild problem if the emotional interactions are not charged and those interactions more meaningful. The students are not detached but have a sense of community.

Conclusions

This study was designed to examine the undergraduate student's perceptions regarding incivility and its relationship to their sense of classroom community. The study did find a significant level of correlation between not only the overall sense of community, but also the student's connectedness to the classroom and how well they perceived they learned in that online classroom. While the characteristics of the online classroom are quite different when compared to the face-to-face traditional classroom, the study did expect to find some perceived uncivil behaviors. These behaviors, while different in action, were to be expected, as Tuckman and Jensen (1977) described in the group development theory. Tuckman and Jensen (1977) stated that the lower the incivility between students and the faster norms could be established, the more a student would feel they had learned. This theory was validated, as the survey points for acts of uncivil behaviors were low and the mean scores for student learning were for all students $M=$ 29.68; male students $M=30.09$; and female students $M=29.46$ out of a possible 40 points.

As with the overall population taking online undergraduate courses in the United States, the study had the largest proportion of students over the age of 26. Oddly, the fact that the courses were required undergraduate general studies classes did not influence the grade level of the participants, as a majority were juniors or higher. The literature did suggest that like students tend to become a group quicker, when they have characteristics generally in common, but when students are further broken down by ethnicity, class level, or age, results become mixed. The current study was designed as a stepping stone or foundation for future research in this field.

Implications

The study set out to fill the gap in the literature, and there is much that can be learned from the study's findings. First, the study did find there is a negative correlation between a student's sense of community online and the perceived level of incivility in the online course. While this was expected based upon the literature review of traditional face-to-face courses, this had not been examined in the online environment to see if the results would be similar. Likewise, each of the constructs of a student's sense of community in the CCS instrument showed significant levels in the overall analysis of the survey results. As the correlations for all three of the CCS components were not strong, there is some room for additional research.

Second, the researcher answered the question purposed by Bjorklund and Rehling (2010) as to what potentially uncivil behaviors students observed most frequently. While this was not the emphasis of the paper, in the process of answering the research question the analysis of the data pointed to a ranking of 18 different behaviors. These behaviors for the participants of this study were found to be different than the behaviors in the research conducted by Clark et al. (2012a) on a different type of population of online students using the same instrument. This ranking of behaviors for undergraduates and students might help Christian universities help focus training for retention practices given to their instructors.

Third, there is a need to continue researching this field, as more gaps were exposed. As this foundational research showed, there is a difference in types of acts of incivility and their levels, as well as, possible geographic influences. These gaps are discussed later in the Recommendations for Future Research. This study was meant to be a foundation for additional work to be done. In that respect, the research helped create a starting point for others looking at examining other sizes of schools in different locations with different student bases. If there had

been a strong correlation, then this research would have given educators a more complete understanding about incivility in the online classroom. However, with a medium correlation within this specific population, research needs to find if incivility in the online classroom is the only factor affecting learning and connectedness for the student. Just based upon a few of the demographic questions the researcher found that minority students taking online courses may have a different reason for feeling a sense of community in the asynchronous course.

Limitations

Educational research can have limitations based upon the setting where the research is conducted in comparison to the setting or environment the participants in the study comes. This first limitation is a threat to external validity. By taking participants out of their normal setting and placing them into a new one for the survey, in this case, or any other unique setting to receive a treatment in any other study can affect the participant's actions (Gall et al., 2007). This study by design eliminates this threat by conducting the survey online, as their class is, and had the invitation posted to the announcement page for their class by the instructor.

Additional threats to external validity were the use of a convenience sample. As the participants were not randomly selected, there could be a bias in the results. While the study examined undergraduate students in asynchronous learning, the design looked to not only fill a gap in the literature regarding online courses but went further to study a Christian institution. Possible biases were examined. The first bias is that it is a Christian university, which implies there is a stronger sense of community than in a public institution (Rovai, 2005; Pazmiño, 1997). Second, the courses are asynchronous, so the students for the most part will never meet face-to-face and are in a safe environment: their homes.

A second limitation to the convenience sample was the overall number of participants. While the study met the requirement for the sample size, gender was the only sub-sets that could be compared against one another. To a small extent, the different grade levels could be examined, but a much larger sample needs to be taken to have confidence in the results. The study could examine with confiTdence a single age range and those in the largest ethnicity. Unfortunately, there was only a small sample size from minority groups. While about 29% of the study was made up of minority students, each of the ethnicities need to be examined separately, making the minority sample sizes even smaller. The statistical significance of most of the ethnic, age, and grade level sub-sets was too weak. That being said, the research cannot be generalized to all populations, just the particular population of the sample (Gall et al., 2007). This research did find a moderate negative correlation between classroom incivility and a student's perceived level of learning and connectedness, but only in regards to the online learning environment in a general studies course in a large Christian university.

The next threat to external validity was the experimenter effect. The researcher has taught the courses being studied in the past and is still instructing in those same general studies courses. The researcher could have posted the announcement with an implication of better grades for those that participated or made participation feel mandatory. Likewise, there was the possibility for the Hawthorne effect, as some of the students might have participated in the study because their instructor was conducting the research. In order to eliminate this external validity threat, the researcher did not teach these courses for the whole 2015 fall semester. Additionally, the instructor of each course acted as the go-between and posted the invitation in each course and did not imply a higher grade with participation.

Since the questions being examined were focused upon a relationship between two variables, a bivariate correlational method was employed (Gall et al., 2007). A Pearson product-moment coefficient was calculated to examine this relationship. However, one of the limitations of this method of magnitude examination assumes the relationship to be linear. If the relationship was nonlinear, then a correlational ratio should have been used to measure the relationship (Gall et al., 2007). Gall et al. (2007) state that another limitation is that it cannot establish a cause-and-effect. As these limitations are a product of the research design, the researcher is offering the study as a starting point to further examine the area of online classroom incivility.

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research needs to be conducted to further understand the relationship between the incivility perceived by the student in the online classroom and the student's sense of community. Some of these suggestions are based upon the limitations discussed earlier. First, replicate this study in a large Christian university on the western portion of the United States. We found there was a difference between the research conducted by Clark et al. (2012a) at a public university in the western United States and this research at a Christian university on the eastern side of the United States. Comparing a western Christian university study to this research would either show similar results, thus leading one to think the difference may rest in the comparison of private to public institutions. However, if there was a difference between the two Christian institutions, then there may be further research conducted to discover the reason.

Second, the study needs to be replicated with institutions based upon differing religions. The lack of research examining religion demonstrated gaps in the literature which made creating a starting point important. Additionally, studying other religious institutions within the United

States may include other ethnicities. For example, historically African American Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and Tribal Colleges may provide a larger population of online students in these ethnicities to analyze, if they have an online presents. As the researcher discovered, the different ethnic groups cannot be mixed together because there does not seem to be a correlation when African American, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American students are combined.

Third, replicate the study in the college-ready courses, also known as remedial courses, for those students already struggling to be a part of the institution. This may also help to focus on the younger age ranges, as students are required to complete these before other general studies courses. These students bring to school a different set of needs and have to pass additional classes. Getting additional attention from the institution by taking remedial courses may have a negative effect because of the course level or name; however, it may have a positive effect because of the attention.

Fourth, replicate the study at institutions which focus primarily on one gender. For example, a woman's university may help focus the relationship of community when there is only one gender together in an online course. Additionally, the research needs to be replicated at institutions of other religions. Both of these suggestions bring a focus on a unique type of institution. The only drawback may be that most other institutions allow for mixed genders or religions in their on-line programs.

Fifth, the length of the online course needs to be varied. Some institutions have courses that are 11–15 weeks long. This study focused on eight week courses. As the group needs to go through the different stages of development to build a community, the question of length of

course in relation to the students sense of community. Individual role development may be

further defined, as the students have in theory more time to build that sense of community.

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APPENDIX A

Permission Letter to use the Classroom Community Scale

Hi,

Yes, you may use the Classroom Community Scale for the research you describe. Make sure you cite the following source article in any report you write:

Rovai, A. P. (2002). Development of an instrument to measure classroom community. *Internet & Higher Education, 5*(3), 197-211. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. EJ663068)

Best wishes,

Fred Rovai

APPENDIX B

Permission to use the Incivility in the Online Teaching Environment

COPYRIGHT LICENSE AGREEMENT

This License Agreement (the "License") is made and entered into this 9th day of April 2014, by
and between Boise State University, hereinafter referred to as the "Licensor," and Liberty
University, hereinafter referred to as the "Licensee."

WHEREAS, the Licensor owns certain rights, title and interests in the Incivility in the Online
Teaching Environment (IOLE) Survey, hereafter called the "Licensed Works," and

WHEREAS, the Licensor desires to grant a license to the Licensee and Licensee desires to
accept the grant of such license pursuant to the terms and provisions of this License
Agreement for the purposes of permitting Licensee to use the Licensed Works for non-
commercial purposes as outlined herein;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the payment of the License fee and the other mutual
promises and benefits contained herein, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Grant of License. The Licensor hereby grants to Licensee, its employees, agents and
contractors, a limited, non-transferrable, non-exclusive license under Licensor's
copyrights to use the Licensed Works to assess the level of incivility in the following
environments: single site, single use at Liberty University.

The License granted herein is for one-time implementation of the Licensed Works for non-commercial purposes only. The Licensed Works are more particularly described as quantitative and qualitative items and is used to gather administrator, staff, faculty and students' perceptions of uncivil, disruptive, and threatening behaviors, the frequency of these perceived behaviors and to elicit suggestions for prevention and intervention. Licensee shall not be authorized to create derivative works of the Licensed Works without the written approval of Licensor. The Licensor reserves all other rights and interest in the Licensed Works, including copyright. Each copy of the Licensed Works and every written documentation, description, marketing piece, advertisement, or other representation of or concerning the Licensed Works shall conspicuously bear a notice of the Licensor's copyright in this form "Copyright 2009 Boise State University. All rights reserved". Licensor represents and warrants that it is the rightful owner of all the rights granted herein, has obtained all required licenses, rights and permissions necessary to convey and hereby does convey the License free and clear of any and all claims, encumbrances and liens.

2. Term. The term of this License shall commence on the date set forth first above and shall terminate on a date eighteen (18) months after commencement.

3. License Fee. In consideration for the granting of the License, the Licensee shall pay to Licensor a one-time License Fee of US $250.00 and a file of the de-identified data, per environment, for a total of US $250.00 due and payable to Boise State University upon execution of this License. No other fees, royalties, expenses or amounts shall be incurred by Licensee in exchange for, or as a condition of receiving this License and the rights

granted herein. The license rights set forth herein shall not become effective until payment of the License fee has been received and accepted by Licensor. All amounts remitted hereunder shall be paid in U.S. dollars.

4. License Services. If Licensee chooses technical support, training and implementation services for each educational environment identified above shall be pursuant to a separate services agreement.

5. Confidentiality/Publication. Information provided by Licensee in the course of using the Licensed Work ("Confidential Information") shall remain confidential and proprietary to Licensee and Licensor shall receive and use the Confidential Information for the sole purpose of assisting Licensee in the implementation of the Licensed Works. Licensor agrees to protect the proprietary nature of the Confidential Information and agrees not to disclose the Confidential Information to any third party or parties without the prior written consent of the Licensee.

6. Liability. To the extent authorized by law, Licensee shall indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Licensor, its officers, employees and agents against any and all claims, damages, liability and court awards including costs, expenses, and attorney fees incurred as a result of any act or omission by Licensee, or its employees, agents, subcontractors, or assignees, arising from Licensee's use of the Licensed Works or any act or omission of Licensee under the terms of this License. Licensee shall pay for all costs arising out of its activities under this License including but not limited to all costs of copying and distribution.

7. Assignment. Licensee shall not assign to, and will not permit the use of said Licensed Works by, anyone, other than Licensee, its agents, employees or contractors, without the prior written consent of the Licensor, which consent will not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

8. Abandonment by Licensee. In case of abandonment of this License by Licensee, Licensee shall give notice to Licensor of its intent to abandon, and the Licensed Works shall thereupon be free and clear of this License and of all rights and privileges attaching thereto.

9. Captions, Construction and License Effect. The captions and headings used in this License are for identification only and shall be disregarded in any construction of the provisions. All of the terms of this License shall inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the respective heirs, successors and assigns of both the Licensor and Licensee. If any portion, clause, paragraph, or section of this License shall be determined to be invalid, illegal, or without force by a court of law or rendered so by legislative act, then the remaining portions of this License shall remain in full force and effect.

10. Consent. Unless otherwise specifically provided, whenever consent or approval of the Licensor or Licensee is required under the terms of this License, such consent or approval shall not be unreasonably withheld or delayed, and shall be deemed to have been given if no response is received within thirty (30) days of the date the request was made. If either party withholds any consent or approval, such party on written request shall deliver to the other party a written statement giving the reasons therefore.

11. Notice. Any notice required or permitted by this License may be delivered in person or sent

by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested to the party at the address as

hereinafter provided, and if sent by mail it shall be effective when posted in the U.S. Mail

Depository with sufficient postage attached thereto:

LICENSOR	LICENSEE
Boise State University	John L. Spohn, Graduate Student
Attn: Office of	Instructor Helms School of Government
Technology Transfer	Liberty University
1910 University Drive	1971 University Boulevard
Boise, ID 83725-1135 Lynchburg, VA 24515	

Notice of change of address shall be treated as any other notice.

12. Applicable Law. The License shall be governed by Idaho law. All construction pursuant to or

interpretation of this License shall comply with and conform to all applicable state,

federal and local laws, regulations, rules and orders.

13. Default. Any failure of either party to perform in accordance with the terms of this

Agreement shall constitute a breach of the agreement. In the event of a material breach by

Licensee, Licensor may, upon written notice to Licensee, declare this License Agreement

terminated and may seek such other and further relief as may be provided by law,

including, but not limited to, a temporary or permanent injunction against Licensee's

continued use of the Licensed Works, actual and/or statutory damages, costs of suit, and reasonable attorney fees incurred by Licensor as a result of the breach, plus interest on all amounts from the date of the breach until paid in full, at the highest rate permitted by law.

14. Complete Agreement. This License supersedes any and all prior written or oral Licenses and there are no covenants, conditions or agreements between the parties except as set forth herein. No prior or contemporaneous addition, deletion, or other amendment hereto shall have any force or affect whatsoever unless embodied herein in writing. No subsequent innovation, renewal, addition, deletion or other amendment hereto shall have any force or effect unless embodied in a written contract executed and approved by both parties.

In witness whereof, the parties hereto have executed this License on the day and year first above written.

Licensee: Licensor:

By: _____ By: _____

John L. Spohn, Graduate Student   Katy Ritter, Director and Technology

Instructor Helms School of Government Transfer Officer

Date: Date:

APPENDIX C

Classroom Community Scale

Please visit the following link to examine the survey

http://debdavis.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/91768740/Rovai-2002-classroom%20community.pdf

APPENDIX D

Incivility in Online Learning Environments

(As the survey is copy written, the copy write holder only gives permission for the copyright disclaimer and a sample set of items to be published)

Copyright Disclaimer: The Incivility in Online Learning Environment (IOLE) Survey is a copyrighted work with all rights reserved under US Copyright Protection laws. Any distribution or reproduction of part or all of the contents in any form is prohibited by law. Because the IOLE Survey is a copyrighted work, it may not, except with express written permission, be distributed or commercially exploited in full or in part; nor may the content be transmitted in any form.

Incivility in Online Learning Environments (IOLE) Survey (Clark 2012©)

Incivility is defined as rude or disruptive behaviors which may result in psychological or physiological distress for the people involved—and if left unaddressed, may progress into threatening situations [or result in temporary or permanent illness or injury] (Clark, 2009, 2013)

The academic environment is defined as any location associated with the provision or delivery of higher education, whether on or off campus including the "live" or virtual classroom or clinical setting, or any setting where teaching and learning occurs (Clark, 2006, 2013)

Demographics*
Demographic items can be modified to 'fit' each specific institution and study parameters.

SOME EXAMPLES:

STUDENTS:

Approximately how many online courses have you taken throughout your education?

Please indicate your level of expertise at learning through online courses:
   o   Very low level of expertise
   o   Low level of expertise
   o   Average level of expertise
   o   High level of expertise
   o   Very high level of expertise

Listed are some STUDENT behaviors you may have experienced or seen in the online nursing academic environment. Disruptive behavior is defined as any speech or action that interferes with the teaching/learning environment. Please respond to the following items regarding the level of "disruption" and how often each behavior occurred over the past 12 months.

	Do you consider this behavior disruptive?				How often have you experienced or seen this in the past 12 months?			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Name-calling, making verbal insults or rude comments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Failing to complete assignments in a timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Posting short, terse responses that do not add meaning to the online discussion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Posting ambiguous or vague responses that do not add meaning to the online discussion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Refusing to participate in required online discussions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making personal attacks or threatening comments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making belittling comments to others about a classmate	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Making belittling comments to others about a faculty member	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Listed are some **FACULTY** behaviors you may have experienced or seen in the online nursing academic environment. Disruptive behavior is defined as any speech or action that interferes with the teaching/learning environment. Please respond to the following items regarding the level of "disruption" and how often each behavior occurred over the past 12 months.

	Do you consider this behavior disruptive?				How often have you experienced or seen this in the past 12 months?			
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Name-calling, making verbal insults or rude comments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Posting a vague or confusing syllabus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Having unclear expectation about assignments	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Changing assignments or course requirements without warning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Failing to post assignments in a timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Failing to respond to student postings in timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Failing to post grades in a timely manner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
All students in a group receiving the same grade regardless of individual effort or contribution	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Unfair or subjective grading	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent do you think incivility in the online learning environment is a problem?
- o No problem at all
- o Mild problem
- o Moderate problem
- o Serious problem
- o I don't know/can't answer

Based on your experiences or perceptions in online classes, do you think that students or faculty are more likely to engage in uncivil behavior?
- o Faculty members are much more likely
- o Faculty members are a little more likely
- o About equal
- o Students are a little more likely
- o Students are much more likely
- o Don't know

In this section you will see a series of incomplete sentences. Please complete each sentence and add any additional comments that will help us improve the online learning environment.

The greatest challenge I have with online learning is.... .

To me, the greatest advantage of online learning is…

The most effective way to promote civility in online learning is to….

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent & Participation

INFORMED CONSENT & PARTICIPATION FORM

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY AND SENSE OF
COMMUNITY OF ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
John L. Spohn
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of incivility and a student's sense of community in an online course. You were selected as a possible participant because you are taking a general studies course online. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

John L. Spohn, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is intended to better understand incivility in the online classroom and a student's sense of community. I plan to publish/distribute results of this study based on the data provided by survey participants.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1.) Complete the online survey between September 28, 2015, and October 16, 2015.
2.) Complete the four demographic questions.
3.) Complete the last two sections of the survey. These sections will have a total of 38 questions. These statements are based upon a scale. The data collection is anonymous. It should take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

There is minimal risk involved in participating in this study. The risk is no more than you would normally face in using the internet. There are no initial and direct benefits for agreeing to be in this study. Please understand that although you may not benefit directly from participation in this study, you have the opportunity to address issues of incivility and learning in the online classroom for future students.

Compensation:

You will receive no payment/reimbursement for taking part in this study; however, there will be a random drawing for one tablet from the participants. The drawing will be held in February 2016.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. This data will be held under password on the Qualtrics.com website.

The online survey will randomly assign a survey number by the Qualtrics website and the data will be destroyed after three years per federal regulations.

The winner of the drawing must understand that your name and address may be provided to the researcher for the purpose of facilitating the prize. If you choose to be a part of the random drawing you will use your Liberty University ID number and only the winner will need to disclose their identity to the researcher for the shipment of the prize. After the prize is received by the winner, the shipping information will be destroyed.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is John L. Spohn. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at JSpohn@liberty.edu /513-502-9681. You may also contact the research's faculty advisor, Dr. Amy McLemore, at ███████████████████.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Your consent to participate in this study is demonstrated by the "clicking" on the "Yes" below.

APPENDIX F

Approval Letter from the Dean of the School of Government

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.

Helms School of Government

September 3, 2015

To whom it may concern:

The following represents official approval from the Helm School of Government to facilitate Mr. John Spohn's dissertation study, specifically:

- Dissertation title: The title of my research project is THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY AND SENSE OF COMMUNITY OF ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

- Purpose of study: to find the correlation between incivility in the electronic classroom and the student's sense of community, which is comprised of the student's sense of learning and their sense of belonging in the classroom at a large Christian university.

- Parameters of study: conduct research by way of online surveys, in the Helms School of Government this B-term and possibly again in the D-term, if 100 participants do not volunteer in the B-term. This research would be conducted with the online students in GOVT200 and GOVT220.

We approve the study and are happy to work with Mr. Spohn in his efforts to complete his dissertation.

Sincerely,

Ron Miller
Associate Dean and Assistant Professor of Government
Helms School of Government

(434) 592-4662

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address 1971 University Boulevard   **phone** 434-592-3691   **email** government@liberty.edu
Lynchburg, VA 24515   **fax**   434-582-7723   **web**   www.liberty.edu/government

APPENDIX G

IRB Approval

The Liberty University Institutional
Review Board has approved
this document for use from
9/11/15 to --
Protocol # 2296.091115

INFORMED CONSENT & PARTICIPATION FORM

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE CLASSROOM INCIVILITY AND SENSE OF
COMMUNITY OF ONLINE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS
John L. Spohn
Liberty University
School of Education

You are invited to be in a research study of incivility and a student's sense of community in an online course. You were selected as a possible participant because you are taking a general studies course online. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

John L. Spohn, a doctoral candidate in the School of Education at Liberty University, is conducting this study.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to better understand incivility in the online classroom and a student's sense of community. I plan to publish/distribute results of this study based on the data provided by survey participants.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:
1.) Complete the online survey between September 28, 2015, and October 16, 2015.
2.) Complete the four demographic questions.
3.) Complete the last two sections of the survey. These sections will have a total of 38 questions. These statements are based upon a scale. The data collection is anonymous. It should take 10-15 minutes to complete the survey.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

There is minimal risk involved in participating in this study. The risk is no more than you would normally face in using the internet. There are no initial and direct benefits for agreeing to be in this study. Please understand that although you may not benefit directly from participation in this study, you have the opportunity to address issues of incivility and learning in the online classroom for future students.

Compensation:

You will receive no payment/reimbursement for taking part in this study; however, there will be a random drawing of the participants for one tablet. The drawing will be held in February 2016.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records. This data will be held under password protection on the Qualtrics.com website.

The online survey will randomly assign a survey number to each participant and the data will be destroyed after three years per federal regulations.

The winner of the drawing must understand that your name and address may be provided to the researcher for the purpose of facilitating the prize. If you choose to be a part of the random drawing you will use your Liberty University ID number and only the winner will need to disclose their identity to the researcher for the shipment of the prize. After the prize is received by the winner, the shipping information will be destroyed. There will be no link made by the survey between the student ID number and the participant responses, as the ID numbers will be compiled separately from the survey data.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is John L. Spohn. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at JSpohn@liberty.edu /513-502-9681. You may also contact the research's faculty advisor, Dr. Amy McLemore, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd, Carter 134, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Please notify the researcher if you would like a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

(NOTE: DO NOT AGREE TO PARTICIPATE UNLESS IRB APPROVAL INFORMATION WITH
CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

Your consent to participate in this study is demonstrated by clicking on the "Take the Survey" button below. If you do not wish to take the survey, then click the "Exit" button.

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

September 11, 2015

John Loren Spohn
IRB Exemption 2296.091115: The Relationship between Online Classroom Incivility and Sense of Community of Online, Undergraduate Students

Dear John,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under exemption category 46.101(b)(2), which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46:101(b):

> (2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:
> (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by submitting a change in protocol form or a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Exemption number.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible changes to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
The Graduate School

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY.
Liberty University | Training Champions for Christ since 1971