PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE ARABIC VERSION OF INCIVILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY (IHE-R)

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Abstract

This paper assesses the psychometric properties of the Arabic version of the incivility of higher education survey (IHE-R) in an Arab sample by analyzing its internal structure. A convenience sample of 150 Arab students was recruited from a governmental university in Saudi Arabia. Data were collected through a self-completion, anonymous survey distributed through message associated with survey link in social media. Cronbach’s alpha and Pearson correlation coefficient were used to assess the psychometric properties of the total scale and its subscales. Translation and validity testing were also done. The findings broadly revealed a valid and reliable Arabic version of the IHE-R. In conclusion, these preliminary findings suggest that the result provides psychometric support for the practicality of the IHE-R in Arab world.

Keywords: Incivility, Higher Education, Student Incivility, Faculty Member Incivility, Incivility in Higher Education, Arabic Version, IHE-R.

Introduction

Teaching and learning has always been a complex effort. To the beginner teachers, teaching seems simple: teachers teach and students learn. However, the complex interpersonal relationship between teacher and student can and does affect this process (Boice, 1996; Braxton & Bayer, 2004; Braxton, Bayer & Noseworthy, 2004). Variables such as teacher preparedness, competence, the interpersonal skills, and the academic skills of the teacher affect the learning environment (Boice, 1996; Braxton, et. al., 2004). Conversely, a student’s emotional maturity, interpersonal skills and attitudes also affect learning and the learning environment. The relationship between teacher and student is founded upon mutual trust (Braxton et. al., 2004), the authority of the teacher granted from title (Yukl, 2002) and the authority of knowledge (Bruffee, 1999). Trust is lost when either party acts in a manner that negatively affects the learning environment (Boice; Braxton & Bayer; Hirschy & Braxton, 2004). Specifically, acts of incivility in the classroom affect the overall learning environment (Boice; Meyers, 2003; Seidman, 2005). Furthermore, uncivil acts affect the
performance of teachers and can negatively impact student learning and retention (Seidman, 2005).

Incivility was defined by Tiberius and Flak (1999) as speech or action indicative of rudeness or lack of respect for those to whom such behavior is directed. Morrissette (2001) added to this definition that incivility is an intentional behavior aimed at disrupting or interfering with the teaching and learning processes of others. He acknowledged that incivility extended a broad continuum of behaviors ranging from lack of preparation for class to reluctance to engage in the learning process. Osinski (2003) distinguished between two prevailing forms of incivility: academic and disciplinary misbehavior. Academic misbehavior denotes actions associated with didactic or clinical performance; disciplinary misbehavior is an umbrella term for failure to comply with a prescribed code of ethical or professional conduct.

The causes of student incivilities are various and complex, but according to Boice (1996) "there are many theories addressed this phenomena and it may be related to: Students’ sense of entitlement and noticed that it can be caused by their view of themselves as consumers of education, or Influence of technology in daily lives, also larger class sizes where students feel anonymous, and Indifference towards learning and authority". All joint to make classroom incivility a significant and difficult fact of life for college teachers and students. One construct, which may assist the reader understand classroom incivility, is choice theory. The basic belief of Glasser’s (1998) Choice theory is: 1. All humans have certain genetic needs encoded into their biological systems. 2. All behavior is purposeful. 3. All behavior is aimed at satisfying our needs. 4. Human beings have final control of their behavior. 5. What is valued is unique to each individual. 6. Given the opportunity and guidance humans can alter their behavior. Furthermore, choice theory suggested that there are five basic needs that every human attempts to meet: 1. Belonging: All human beings have a need to feel love and to connect socially with others. 2. Power: All human beings have a need for power and control in their lives.3. Freedom: All human beings have the need to make choices and pursue what interests them. 4. Fun: Human beings need a sense of joy, discovery and play in their lives. 5. Survival: Basic physiological needs must be meet (food, water, shelter, etc.).

The literature suggested that all behavior occurs in an attempt to satisfy one or more of these five basic needs (Glasser, 1998; Mishler & Cherry, 1999; Stewart, 1998). Using this construct, student incivility can be understood as a conscious choice a student or students
makes to satisfy some combination of these needs (Glasser, 1998). Boice (1996) and Bray and Del Favero (2004) mentioned that most acts of classroom incivility stemmed from power struggles in the classroom.

DeLucia & Iasenza (1995) classify incivility into three categories of behaviors viewed as disruptive or disrespectful by faculty. First, aggressive student behaviors range from insensitivity to the feelings of others to physical altercations. Next, irresponsible student behaviors relate to actions indicating that the student has failed to take responsibility for their own learning. These behaviors are considered incivilities because they indicate a lack of respect toward the instructor who outlined the course requirements and a lack of respect for the class since the student will not be able to contribute to class discussion. On the other hand, irresponsible student behaviors may be exhibited by students who are very prepared but prevent others from participating in the learning process by dominating class discussion. Finally, inappropriate and annoying student behaviors are described as behaviors felt to erode a healthy classroom environment. These are behaviors that might be considered rude both inside and outside of the classroom. Luparell (2004) found that most incidents of uncivil student behavior revolved around student performance such as receiving criticism, failing a course, and grading protocols. Clark and Springer (2007) described additional student behaviors such as “cheating on examinations; using cell phones or pagers during class; holding distracting conversations; making sarcastic remarks or gestures; demanding make-up exams, extensions or other favors; and making disapproving groans” (p. 9).

A qualitative study aimed to explore the experiences of nursing students as targets of incivility in clinical settings; four focus groups were conducted comprising 21 prelicensure nursing students. The results showed Uncivil behaviors fell into three themes: exclusionary, hostile or rude, and dismissive (Anthony & yastik, 2011).

Addressing incivility by putting in place measures to decrease or prevent it can be a difficult challenge to faculty and administrators. Policies that set clear guidelines for all students, regardless of what setting they are in, must include a description of behaviors that will not be tolerated, the consequences of performing that behavior, and the repercussions for repeated offenses. Despite the absence of attention devoted to the origin and reduction/elimination of incivilities in universities, faculties can be instrumental in establishing boundaries, influencing student behaviors, and promoting civil learning environments (Clayton, 2000; Heinemann, 1996; Monaghan, 1995). Many specific strategies were addressed in literature including: the use of effective communication skill, Heinemann
(1996) recommended that faculty can remain respectful and manage student behavior through effective communication (e.g., active listening). And in order to improve faculty-student communication and avoid incivility, the faculty should use civil language, maintain inclusive attitudes, teach the language of disagreement, respectfully listen to students, and serve as role models for respect and understanding.

Spelling out expectations in the syllabus also according to Downs (1992) should continually be evaluated to ensure that expectations of the students are clear and concise. She further remarked that student anxiety and resentment grows when there is a lack of clarity. As well Moore (1996), stressed on many points that prevent incivility in classroom such as defining appropriate conduct, using mid-term teaching feedback, establishing a collaborative learning environment, using peer observations. In addition, Boice (1996) focused on setting a good example, reframing potential conflicts, reengaging students, and using a back-to-basics faculty orientation.

Incivility among students in the universities in Saudi Arabia has generated much discussion at faculty meetings, and in the press. Uncivil student behavior in classroom and against faculty has gained increased media attention. According to recent reports, such behavior may be increasing, thus jeopardizing the wellbeing of faculty, students, and the educational process. Research focusing on incivility in higher education is limited in Saudi Arabia. So this paper will hopefully add to the body of knowledge by describing the psychometric properties of well-developed survey of incivility in higher education IHE-R (Clark, et al., 2009), the Arabic version as a step to encourage the using of such a tool which can assess in addressing the issue in Arab countries.

Description of IHE-R survey

Incivility in Higher Education (IHE) survey tool that was adapted from the Incivility in Nursing Education (INE) survey developed by Clark (Clark et al., 2009). The IHE survey quantitatively measures administrator, staff, faculty, and student perceptions of uncivil behaviors that include both disruptive and threatening behaviors, how often the behaviors are perceived to occur, and possible strategies for improving the level of civility in higher education. The last quantitative question asks for participants to choose their top three strategies for improving civility within their major from a list of ten possible strategies. Originally, the INE tool was designed to be used to measure perceptions of incivility in nursing education but has since been adapted as the IHE to be used in any academic
discipline within higher education and to determine differences in perceptions of incivility between or among disciplines. The IHE is a carbon copy of the INE except for two items, which refer specifically to nursing, and minor rewording. The IHE measures perceptions of incivility in higher education and between higher education disciplines (C. Clark, personal communication, 2016). The survey is designed in a way that allows for assembly data from faculty and students or from only faculty or only students (C. Clark, personal communication, 2016). The survey is divided into three sections. Demographic data is collected in the first section and includes gender, age, ethnicity, and academic discipline, and year in the program. The second section is the quantitative section and is divided into two sub-sections; one section focuses on student behaviors and the other focuses on faculty behaviors. Each section addresses the two domains of disruptive behaviors and threatening behaviors. The first domain lists 16 student behaviors that may be considered disruptive and 19 faculty behaviors; using a

Likert type scale participants indicate if they consider the behavior as disruptive (Always, Usually, Sometimes, and Never), and how often the behavior was experienced or observed during the current academic year (Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never). The second domain lists 13 threatening behaviors for both students and faculty and using a yes/no scale asks participants if that behavior had happened to them or someone they know within their discipline during the current academic year. The two domains of level of incivility (disruptive and threatening) and how often the behaviors occur are analyzed separately. Two additional questions incite information about the participant’s perception of the prevalence of student and faculty incivility (No problem at all, Mild problem, Moderate problem, Serious problem), and whether students or faculty are more likely to engage in uncivil behavior (Faculty members are much more likely, Faculty members are a little more likely, About equal, Students are a little more likely, Students are much more likely, Don’t know). An additional quantitative question asks the participant to choose three strategies from a list that they would suggest for improving the level of civility in their academic discipline.

The third section of the original INE/IHE survey is the qualitative portion of the survey and utilizes six open-ended questions that ask respondents for ways both faculty and students contribute to incivility and for suggestions on preventions or interventions. The first four questions seek input on what factors and how do student and faculty contribute to incivility in the academic setting (Clark et al., 2009, p. 9). The fifth question invites participants to
identify potential solutions regarding how university stakeholders should address incivility. The final question provides the participant the opportunity to add any additional thoughts.

**Methods**

**Translation & Validity**

The translation procedure (English to Arabic) was performed according to the widely accepted recommendations of Brislin et al. (1970). First, the original English version of the IHE- R was independently translated into Arabic by two bilingual translators whose native language was Arabic. Second, the two translators and the researcher compared the translations and reconciled any discrepancies to produce a unified Arabic version. Next, a panel of experts assessed the interim version of the IHE- R in terms of face validity and content validity. The panel was composed of five faculty member in nursing school, art, and education, science, and law schools. In addition the experts evaluate the survey for the appropriateness of the items to the Arabic culture. Few changes were suggested by the panel of experts concerning rephrasing of some words, wording of sentences in some items. Changes were integrated in the final version. This preliminary Arabic version of the IHE- R was then back translated into English by two different bilingual translators. Then, the resulting survey was again compared with the original English version.

**Sample**

**Sample and Setting**

A convenient sampling procedure of 150 students were recruited in the study from one governmental university located in Saudi Arabia. They were recruited from all faculties, All participants are full time undergraduates who spent at least three years at the university.

**Data collection Procedure**

The study began with obtaining IRB approval from one of the governmental Universities in Saudi Arabia. The IHE used in this study is available from the survey designer. Permission to use the survey was obtained from the survey designer, Dr. Cynthia Clark. The survey originally was administered through an online survey platform (Qualtrics) at Boise State University, but the researcher had used similar platforms for the IHE such as Survey Monkey. The Arabic version of IHE-R survey was formatted for this study through Survey Monkey and the link to the survey was given to students using social medial. The
brief survey took participants about 10-15 minutes to complete. Data collection using the survey was completed in the spring semester of the undergraduate program. The researcher sent an introductory message, with explanation of informed consent and the link to the survey, to the selected students. The study introduction included a highlighting on the importance of the respondents’ involvement in the study as a method of making improvements within their chosen discipline. Undergraduate upperclassmen students received message announcements by a student within their discipline. The invitation introduced the study to the potential participants and explained the purpose of the study, the potential impact of the study on their own professional discipline and in higher education, and contact information for the researcher. Students were advised that participation in the study was voluntary and the results of the survey were anonymous and confidential and would not affect student grades or class standing. Students decided to either participate in the study by completing the survey or decline the invitation by non-response to the invitation. Students were able to access the survey at their own convenience by accessing the hyperlink provided in the electronic communication. Once the participant clicked the hyperlink from the message, they were directed to the survey home page. There the students read an introduction page with the purpose of the study, instructions, and the consent explanation. Students chose “next page” if they wished to participate or exited out of the survey if they chose not to participate. After the introduction/consent page, the survey questions began. The survey platform compiled the data for analysis. When all the surveys were completed, the researcher obtained the compilation of data from the online survey platform and then inserted the data into SPSS.

Results

Internal consistency was used to examine the reliability of the IHE-R. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) was computed to assess the internal consistency of the translated survey. Values ≥ 0.70 were considered acceptable (Nunnally JC., 1978). The results of the pilot showed that total Cronbach’s alpha = .897 for the IHE-R (see table 1). Concurrent validity of the IHE- R was demonstrated by estimating Pearson correlation coefficients between student incivility and faculty member incivility and the total score of IHE- R were showed in table 2.
Table 1: Reliability index of IHE-R

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>No. of Items</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
<th>Confidence interval (CI)</th>
<th>P.value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student incivility</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.898</td>
<td>0.84-0.96</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty incivility</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.72-0.85</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total IHE-R</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>0.84-0.96</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Pearson Correlation of student and faculty perception with the total score of IHE-R

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student incivility</td>
<td>0.861**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty incivility</td>
<td>0.732**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at α=0.001 (2-tailed)

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to establish a valid and reliable Arabic version of the incivility in higher education survey (IHE-R) for use in Arab worlds. The original IHE-R is well grounded in previous researches and has exhibited fairly robust psychometric qualities. The IHE-R was developed by Clark et al. (2009), and the results of this study yielded a valid and reliable Arabic version of the IHE-R, it provides psychometric support for the practicality of the IHE-R in Arab world. These results are consistent with Clark et. al, (2009) psychometric properties study of INE which is a carbon copy of the IHE-R survey. According to Clark et al. (2009), inter-item coefficients indicate a range of .808 to .889 for student behavior (indicating good inter-item reliability), and range of .918 to .955 for faculty behavior indicating very good inter-item reliability level (Burns & Groves, 2005). Other researchers have used the INE with similar findings (Beck, 2009; Cicotti, 2012; Hoffman, 2012; Marchiondo et al., 2010). Also it worthwhile mentioning Also the students were asked to provide feedback about the instrument: instrument design, appearance of the survey, ease of use, clarity of directions, ease of comprehension and the length of the survey, and the results of the study showed that students found the items in the two parts of the questionnaire easy to understand. None of the participants contacted the investigator for queries or requests. This support the validity of the tool.
One limitation of this study need to be noted. The sample was derived from a single governmental university in one geographic area. Given this limitation, this study should be seen as a preliminary examination of the IHEzR. Future studies need to further explore the scale with larger samples of students from different universities and geographical areas, additionally in other Arabic speaking countries and subcultures. Nonetheless, the findings provide important information about the psychometric prosperities and usability of a widely used survey. A strength of this study was the translation process, which involved qualified translators with different academic backgrounds to provide a sensible treatment of linguistic and cross-cultural considerations (Hambleton, 1994).

Conclusion

The Arabic incivility in higher education survey (IHE-R) has satisfactory psychometric properties as the results are in line with those available from studies testing the English version. The Arabic version of the survey is appropriate for evaluation of uncivil behavior among students and faculty members in higher education who are Arabic-speakers.

Conflict of interest

None declared.

Acknowledgment

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References