

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Pharmacy Students' Opinions on Civility and Preferences Regarding Professors

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Submitted November 11, 2005; accepted December 18, 2005; published August 15, 2006.

Objectives. To determine the types of classroom behavior that pharmacy students consider uncivil, participation in such behaviors, what type of professor and classroom setting they prefer, and changes in these opinions over time.

Methods. A survey instrument was used to collect data about students' feelings concerning incivility, participation in uncivil behaviors, and preferences concerning classroom experience. Demographic data were used to identify characteristics of student populations and ensure the same students were studied over different time periods.

Results. Younger students felt cheating was the most uncivil classroom behavior while older students most disliked cell phone/beeper use. Chewing gum was least offensive for all groups. Students desired that teachers cared about their learning experience, but few would phone a professor at home.

Conclusions. Differences in views concerning civility were found among pharmacy students in their first, third, and fourth years, which may indicate that students' beliefs, actions, and preferences change as they progress through the curriculum.

Keywords: pharmacy students, civility, classroom preferences, behavior

INTRODUCTION

“Professionalism is displayed in the way pharmacists conduct themselves in professional situations. This definition implies a demeanor that is created through a combination of behaviors, including courtesy and politeness when dealing with patients, peers, and other health care professionals,” wrote RK Chalmers.¹ Further, in the *White Paper on Pharmacy Student Professionalism*, professionalism is defined as the “active demonstration of the traits of a professional.” More specifically, it is described as “displaying values, beliefs and attitudes that put the needs of another above your personal needs.”² Pharmacists are expected to show respect and maintain the boundaries of privacy and discretion. They must possess and display empathy towards patients and fellow health care workers.¹ Not everyone who demonstrates professionalism can be a successful pharmacist. It takes an individual who has a desire to be a professional. Proper education is necessary along with the desire.

Students are expected to present a professional demeanor in the classroom setting as a first step in becoming a pharmacy professional. For example, Ohio Northern

University's (ONU) Raabe College of Pharmacy clearly states in its mission statement that the purpose of education is to “prepare students to enter the practice of pharmacy so that they may contribute effectively to their profession.”³

Certainly, civility is a cornerstone of professionalism. Hammer stated that “civility must be present to have professionalism. It is the minimum set of standards for professional behavior; it serves as the foundation for professionalism.”⁴ Furthermore, society expects its members to behave in a civil manner which could be defined as exercising/showing simple politeness or courtesy.^{5,6} Civility has been equated with interpersonal manners.⁷ Since many pharmacists must interact extensively with patients, colleagues, and other employees, pharmacy students should be concerned with developing/demonstrating civil behavior. However, classroom incivility still occurs.^{8,9}

Feldman defined classroom incivility as “an action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom.”¹⁰ Defining what specific actions and behaviors are uncivil is difficult because everyone has his/her own definitions and opinions. Educators use their own expectations to set guidelines in order to prevent incivilities and provide a positive classroom experience. However, educators and students may not agree on what is uncivil or civil classroom behavior,

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and they may perceive incivilities at varying degrees. Few studies on classroom incivility have been performed. Most studies have been conducted from the educators' point of view. This cohort study considered the students' perspective of what they consider uncivil behaviors and actions. Demographics were obtained since previous studies have suggested that factors such as age and year in the program may influence students' perceptions of incivility. For example, in a previous study, it was found that students in their later years of a pharmacy program were less likely to cheat.¹¹ In addition, the study instrument asked students what characteristics they perceived as important for a professor to have/demonstrate in a classroom setting. This was included to determine whether a certain type of professor was more likely or less likely to have a student behave uncivilly in his/her classroom as implicated in Indiana University's 2000 survey on academic incivility.¹² If such a correlation were found, it would help explain why some professors have more unruly students compared to other professors, and furthermore, might help professors to prevent future incivilities. This cohort study looked at pharmacy students in their first year of the pharmacy program at ONU and again in their third and fourth years.

The purpose of this project was to determine what ONU pharmacy students consider uncivil classroom behavior and what characteristics they perceived as important in a professor and in a classroom setting. Objectives included determining what type of student might be prone to uncivil behavior and whether there were differences perceptions of incivility based on demographics. Finally, the groups of students are compared to each other to find out whether their behaviors and views change as they progress further in the pharmacy program. This cohort study was conducted to help pharmacy educators have a better understanding of classroom incivility and preferences of students.

METHODS

A self-administered survey instrument consisting of 3 sections was designed using elements of Indiana University's survey on academic civility, Berger's *Promoting Civility in Pharmacy Education*, and several scholarly articles.^{6,8,10,12,13} The instrument was pretested for face and content validity using 5 student volunteers. In addition, the instrument was approved by ONU's internal review board.

The first section of the survey instrument consisted of 30 items used to determine what students considered uncivil classroom behavior or actions. These 30 items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale on which 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree." For each

item, students were also asked if they participated in the behavior or action listed. The second section used the same Likert scale and consisted of 18 items on students' preferences for contacting professors, what type of professor they preferred (male versus female, etc), and other classroom issues. The third portion of the survey instrument gathered demographic information.

The survey instrument was initially administered to students in the first-year *Profession of Pharmacy* course, following an examination period. The *Profession of Pharmacy* course is taught during the spring quarter of the students' freshman year based on a 6-year program. The same survey instrument was administered to the same class of students 2 years later in the *Profession of Pharmacy* third-year sequence, that time following a lecture period. Finally, the survey instrument was administered 1 year later, when the students were enrolled in the pharmaceuticals module in their fourth year of pharmacy school, following a lecture period. Only those survey instruments completed by students who were freshmen in fall 2002 and who remained in the program through fall 2005 were included in the analysis. All survey instruments included a cover letter introducing the students to the project. Upon completion of the survey, students were given a piece of candy as an incentive at all 3 times.

The demographics portion of the survey instrument was used to determine differences in the student population. A specific demographic question was included on the survey instrument administered in the first, third, and fourth year students to identify students who had not been at ONU during all 4 years of the program. Those survey instruments completed by transfer students and students with a grade point average below 2.4 were omitted from the analysis.

The completed survey instruments were analyzed using *SPSS* version 11.5.¹⁴ Descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the Likert scales indicating an item's level of incivility or preference. Means and standard deviations were used to report the most uncivil to least uncivil behavior as well as to place in order the preferences students had on classroom matters. Analysis of variance, chi square tests, and Bonferroni post hoc tests were conducted to determine any significant differences between years of the study and certain demographic groups regarding their responses and whether certain groups were more likely to be uncivil. Alpha was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

Results were based on data collected in spring 2003, fall 2004, and fall 2005. Out of 277 students enrolled in the *Profession of Pharmacy* first-year sequence, 254 students (91.7%) participated in the survey. One hundred

seventy-four of 190 students participated during their third-professional year (91.6%) and 160 out of 180 (88.9%) students participated during their fourth year. For this cohort study, the responses on 136 survey instruments completed by the pharmacy students during their first year, 129 completed by the students during their third year, and 130 completed by the students during their fourth year were used. To be included in the cohort, all respondents had to be freshmen in the fall of 2002. The majority of respondents were female (57.7%), were an average of 21 years old (79.2%), attended public high school (86.2%), and had a fourth-year GPA between 3.00 and 3.49 (40.6%). Other demographics, including religion, race, and citizenship showed a lack of diversity at ONU: 88.2% of the respondents were Christian; 96.9% were Caucasian; and 100% were US citizens (Table 1).

In their first and third years, the students indicated cheating was the most uncivil behavior (4.7 ± 0.9 and 4.6 ± 0.8 , respectively), followed by use of cell phones or beepers in class (4.5 ± 0.9 and 4.6 ± 0.7 , respectively), and making offensive remarks (4.4 ± 0.9 and 4.4 ± 0.9 , respectively). However, by their fourth year, the students perceived the use of cell phones or beepers in class to be the *most* uncivil behavior (4.4 ± 0.7), followed by making offensive remarks (4.3 ± 0.8) and cheating (4.2 ± 1.4). Gum chewing was thought to be the least uncivil behavior by students at all stages (first-year students = 1.6 ± 0.9 , third-year students = 1.6 ± 1.0 , and fourth-year students = 1.4 ± 0.7) along with drinking in class (2.1 ± 1.0 , 1.9 ± 1.0 , and 1.6 ± 0.7 , respectively), and eating in class (2.5 ± 1.0 , 2.3 ± 1.0 , and 2.0 ± 0.9 , respectively; Table 2). Although cheating was considered the most uncivil behavior by the students during their first and third years, 26 respondents (8 first-year students, 12 third-year students, and 6 fourth-year students) admitted to practicing this behavior. Also, although using a cell phone or beeper was considered the most uncivil behavior by students during their fourth year, 31 respondents (7 first-year students, 10 third-year students, and 14 fourth-year students) admitted to participating in this behavior (Table 3).

The perception of several of these uncivil behaviors changed significantly as students progressed through the pharmacy program. Fourth-year students believed that cheating was less uncivil compared to their perception of this behavior when they were first- and third-year students ($p = 0.00$ and $p < 0.01$, respectively). In their first year, students thought that sarcastic remarks/gestures were more uncivil (3.9 ± 1.0) than they did during their third year (3.8 ± 1.0) and fourth year (3.5 ± 1.1 , $p = 0.01$). However, in their first year of pharmacy school, students believed that shuffling backpacks (3.0 ± 1.0)

Table 1. Characteristics of Fourth-Year Pharmacy Students Who Participated in a Study on Civility and Classroom Preferences

Variable	No. (%)
Age (N = 130) years	
20	3 (2.3)
21	103 (79.2)
22	24 (18.5)
High school (N = 130)	
Public	112 (86.2)
Private	18 (13.8)
Gender (N = 130)	
Male	55 (42.3)
Female	75 (57.7)
Grade point average (N = 128)	
2.00-2.49	1 (0.8)
2.50-2.99	31 (24.2)
3.00-3.49	52 (40.6)
3.50-4.00	44 (34.4)
Religious preference (N = 127)	
Protestant	57 (44.9)
Catholic	55 (43.3)
Other	15 (11.8)
Race (N = 130)	
White	126 (96.9)
Asian-American	2 (1.5)
African-American	0 (0.0)
Latino	0 (0)
Middle-Eastern	0 (0.0)
Other	2 (1.5)
US Citizen (N = 130)	
Yes	130 (100)
Ranking of family experience (N = 130)	
Excellent	87 (66.9)
Good	36 (27.7)
Neutral	3 (2.3)
Fair	3 (2.3)
Poor	1 (0.8)

and dominating classroom discussion (3.0 ± 1.0) were less uncivil than they did by their third year (3.1 ± 1.1 and 3.2 ± 0.9 , respectively) and fourth year (3.3 ± 0.9 for both behaviors; $p = 0.02$ and $p = 0.04$, respectively). Lastly, fourth-year students thought that eating and drinking in class (2.0 ± 0.9 and 1.6 ± 0.7 , respectively) were significantly less uncivil ($P = 0.00$, $P < 0.01$ and $P = 0.00$, $P < 0.01$) than they did during their first (2.5 ± 0.9 and 2.1 ± 1.0 , respectively) and third years (2.3 ± 1.0 and 1.9 ± 1.0 , respectively). See Table 2.

Table 2. Perception of Uncivil Behavior Among a Class of Pharmacy Students Surveyed in Their First, Third and Fourth Years of Pharmacy School

Uncivil Behavior	First Year (n = 136) Mean (SD)	Third Year (n = 129) Mean (SD)	Fourth Year (n = 130) Mean (SD)	P
Cheating†	4.7 (0.9)	4.6 (0.8)	4.2 (1.4)	<0.01
Using cell phone/beeper	4.5 (0.9)	4.6 (0.7)	4.4 (0.7)	0.23
Making offensive remarks	4.4 (0.9)	4.4 (0.9)	4.3 (0.8)	0.67
Prolonged chattering	4.2 (0.8)	4.2 (0.7)	4.1 (0.8)	0.52
Missing deadlines	4.0 (0.9)	4.0 (0.9)	4.0 (0.8)	0.99
Newspapers/magazines	3.9 (1.0)	3.9 (1.0)	3.8 (1.1)	0.53
Sarcastic remarks/gestures*	3.9 (1.0)	3.8 (1.0)	3.5 (1.1)	0.01
Demanding special treatment	3.8 (1.0)	4.0 (1.0)	3.8 (1.0)	0.46
Talking out of turn	3.7 (0.9)	3.8 (0.8)	3.7 (0.8)	0.44
Sleeping	3.6 (1.1)	3.7 (1.1)	3.5 (1.1)	0.15
Using computer other reason	3.5 (1.1)	3.6 (1.0)	3.4 (1.0)	0.19
Disapproving groans	3.5 (1.0)	3.5 (0.9)	3.3 (0.9)	0.21
Challenging authority	3.5 (1.1)	3.5 (1.0)	3.4 (1.1)	0.76
Unprepared for class	3.5 (0.9)	3.4 (0.9)	3.3 (0.9)	0.53
Challenging credibility	3.4 (1.1)	3.4 (1.2)	3.3 (1.0)	0.33
Arriving late	3.2 (1.0)	3.2 (1.0)	3.2 (0.9)	0.94
Skipping class	3.2 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)	3.0 (1.1)	0.61
Leaving class early	3.1 (1.1)	3.1 (1.1)	3.1 (0.9)	0.95
I paid for this mentality	3.1 (0.9)	3.2 (1.0)	3.2 (0.9)	0.46
Shuffling backpacks/papers *	3.0 (1.0)	3.1 (1.1)	3.3 (0.9)	0.02
Dominating discussion*	3.0 (1.0)	3.2 (0.9)	3.3 (0.9)	0.04
Challenging Knowledge	3.0 (1.1)	3.0 (1.1)	3.0 (1.0)	1.00
Not paying attention	3.0 (1.0)	3.0 (0.9)	3.0 (0.9)	0.98
Asking for deadline extension	3.0 (1.1)	3.0 (1.0)	3.3 (1.1)	0.07
Avoiding eye contact	3.0 (1.0)	2.7 (0.9)	2.8 (0.9)	0.05
Reluctance to answer	2.6 (0.8)	2.7 (0.9)	2.7 (0.8)	0.70
Not taking notes	2.6 (0.9)	2.6 (0.9)	2.8 (0.9)	0.05
Eating in class†	2.5 (1.0)	2.3 (1.0)	2.0 (0.9)	<0.01
Drinking in class†	2.1 (1.0)	1.9 (1.0)	1.6 (0.7)	<0.01
Chewing gum in class	1.6 (0.9)	1.6 (1.0)	1.4 (0.7)	0.19

*Bonferroni significant difference between P-1/P-4 groups

†Bonferroni significant difference between P-1/P-3 and P-3/P-4 groups

Likert scale: 1=strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree

Significant differences were found in students' participation in various uncivil behaviors at various stages of the pharmacy program. Students in their first year of the program were significantly less likely to participate in prolonged chattering (30.9%, 54.1%, 45.1%, and $p = 0.00$, $P < 0.01$), disapproving groans (30.9%, 45%, and 44.7%, respectively; $p = 0.03$), being unprepared for class (37.5%, 60.6%, 57.9%, respectively; $p = 0.00$ $P < 0.01$), avoiding eye contact (47%, 69.4%, 64%, respectively; and $p = 0.00$ $P < 0.01$), eating in class (53.7%, 73.5%, 82.5%, respectively; $p = 0.00$ $P < 0.01$), and

drinking in class (74.3%, 89.4%, 93.9%, respectively; $p = 0.00$ $P < 0.01$) than they were by their third and fourth years. Furthermore, during their first and third years, the students were significantly more likely to participate in challenging the teacher's knowledge than they were during their fourth year (28.9%, 27%, 14%, respectively; $P = 0.01$). See Table 3.

The next section of the survey instrument considered student preferences in the classroom. During their first, third, and fourth years, the students moderately to strongly agreed that professors caring was what was most

Table 3. Participation in Uncivil Behaviors Among a Class of Pharmacy Students Surveyed in Their First, Third and Fourth Years of Pharmacy School

Uncivil Behavior in Which the Student Reported Participating	First Year (n = 136)	Third Year (n = 129)	Fourth Year (n = 130)	P
Cheating	8 (5.9)	12 (11)	6 (5.3)	0.19
Using cell phone/beeper	7 (5.1)	10 (8.9)	14 (12.3)	0.13
Making offensive remarks	6 (4.4)	9 (8.2)	5 (4.4)	0.35
Prolonged chattering	42 (30.9)	60 (54.1)	51 (45.1)	<0.01
Missing deadlines	19 (14)	20 (17.9)	10 (8.8)	0.14
Newspapers/magazines	21 (15.4)	27 (24.1)	22 (19.3)	0.23
Sarcastic remarks/gestures	30 (22.1)	31 (28.4)	25 (19.2)	0.42
Demanding special treatment	3 (2.2)	8 (7.3)	8 (7.1)	0.12
Talking out of turn	26 (19.1)	27 (24.3)	17 (14.9)	0.21
Sleeping	60 (44.1)	42 (37.8)	57 (50)	0.19
Using computer other reason	35 (25.7)	22 (20.2)	19 (16.7)	0.21
Disapproving groans	42 (30.9)	49 (45)	51 (44.7)	0.03
Challenging authority	22 (16.3)	21 (18.9)	13 (11.4)	0.29
Unprepared for class	51 (37.5)	66 (60.6)	66 (57.9)	<0.01
Challenging credibility	17 (12.7)	19 (17.1)	10 (8.8)	0.17
Arriving late	84 (61.8)	81 (73)	71 (62.3)	0.13
Skipping class	86 (63.7)	81 (74.3)	80 (70.2)	0.19
Leaving class early	37 (27.4)	44 (39.3)	45 (39.5)	0.07
I paid for this mentality	51 (38.3)	45 (42.1)	49 (45)	0.58
Shuffling backpacks/papers	106 (78.5)	95 (84.8)	85 (74.6)	0.16
Dominating discussion	18 (13.2)	14 (12.7)	7 (6.3)	0.15
Challenging knowledge	39 (28.9)	30 (27)	16 (14)	0.01
Not paying attention	103 (75.7)	88 (78.6)	98 (86)	0.12
Asking for deadline extension	42 (30.9)	29 (26.4)	13 (11.5)	<0.01
Avoiding eye contact	63 (47)	77 (69.4)	73 (64)	<0.01
Reluctance to answer	83 (61)	73 (66.4)	84 (73.7)	0.11
Not taking notes	61 (44.9)	60 (54.1)	64 (56.1)	0.16
Eating in class	73 (53.7)	83 (73.5)	94 (82.5)	<0.01
Drinking in class	101 (74.3)	101 (89.4)	107 (93.9)	<0.01
Chewing gum in class	126 (93.3)	102 (90.3)	110 (96.5)	0.17

Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree

important to them (4.4 ± 0.6 , 4.5 ± 0.7 , and 4.5 ± 0.6). At all stages of the program, the respondents did not believe that students have a lot of power over teachers (2.4 ± 0.9 , 2.4 ± 0.9 , and 2.3 ± 0.7 , respectively). Also, students were not likely to contact a professor at home (2.0 ± 0.9 , 1.9 ± 0.9 , and 1.9 ± 0.8 , respectively). See Table 4.

Significant differences in preferences in the classroom were found. During their first and third years, students found it significantly more important to read the course syllabus compared to during their fourth year (4.2 ± 0.9 , 4.2 ± 0.9 , 3.8 ± 0.9 , respectively; $P < 0.01$). First-year students found it less important to have a teacher with pharmacy experience than they did as third-

and fourth-year students (3.8 ± 0.8 , 4.2 ± 0.9 , 4.3 ± 0.6 , respectively; $P < 0.01$). Fewer students preferred a professor of their own race in their first year compared to during their third and fourth years (2.5 ± 0.9 , 2.7 ± 0.9 , 3.0 ± 1.0 , respectively; $P < 0.01$). See Table 4.

DISCUSSION

Many of the items in this survey addressed topics in the text, *Promoting Civility in the Pharmacy Classroom*.¹³ Indeed, many of the students' responses coincided with findings discussed/discussions in the book. However, one should remember that civility, like beauty, lies in the eye of the beholder. What one student or faculty

Table 4. Preferences Among a Class of Pharmacy Students Surveyed in Their First, Third and Fourth Years of Pharmacy School Regarding Professors

Preference	PY1 (n = 136): Mean ± SD	PY3 (n = 129): Mean ± SD	PY4 (n = 130): Mean ± SD	P value (Anova):
It is important to me that teachers care about my learning experience	4.4 (0.6)	4.5 (0.7)	4.5 (0.6)	0.38
I have read the course syllabus†	4.2 (0.9)	4.2 (0.9)	3.8 (0.9)	<0.01
I prefer a teacher with more education	4.0 (0.9)	3.9 (0.9)	4.0 (0.8)	0.46
I e-mail my teachers with questions or concerns	4.0 (0.8)	3.8 (0.9)	3.9 (0.9)	0.22
I prefer a teacher with pharmacy experience†	3.8 (0.8)	4.2 (0.9)	4.3 (0.6)	<0.01
I visit teachers during office hours	3.6 (0.9)	3.6 (0.9)	3.7 (0.9)	0.45
I talk to my teachers after class	3.6 (0.9)	3.3 (0.9)	3.4 (1.0)	0.05
I should receive more attention because I attend a private university	3.5 (1.0)	3.6 (1.0)	3.6 (1.1)	0.71
I believe teachers care about my learning experience	3.5 (1.0)	3.6 (1.0)	3.7 (0.8)	0.28
Teachers have a lot of power over students	3.4 (1.0)	3.6 (0.9)	3.4 (1.0)	0.16
I telephone teachers at their office	3.3 (1.1)	3.3 (1.1)	3.2 (1.0)	0.38
I have read the student handbook	2.9 (1.2)	2.8 (1.1)	2.7 (1.1)	0.25
I prefer a male teacher versus a female one	2.6 (0.9)	2.7 (0.9)	2.8 (0.7)	0.18
I prefer a teacher of my own gender	2.6 (0.9)	2.6 (0.8)	2.7 (0.7)	0.26
I prefer a teacher of my own race*	2.5 (0.9)	2.7 (0.9)	3.0 (1.0)	<0.01
I prefer a teacher of my own age	2.5 (0.9)	2.6 (0.8)	2.6 (0.8)	0.42
Students have a lot of power over teachers	2.4 (0.9)	2.4 (0.9)	2.3 (0.7)	0.75
I telephone teachers at their home	2.0 (0.9)	1.9 (0.9)	1.9 (0.8)	0.41

*Bonferroni significant difference between P-1/P-4 groups

†Bonferroni significant difference between P-1/P-3 and P-1/P-4 groups

member considers intolerable may be perfectly acceptable to another individual.

Students were annoyed by the following incivilities addressed in Berger's book:¹³ (1) Tardiness on the part of students as well as faculty members. At all points in the pharmacy program the students slightly agreed that this was an uncivil behavior, yet the majority had been tardy at one time or another. (2) Cutting or canceling class. Skipping class was also considered slightly uncivil behavior; nevertheless, the majority of the students had participated in this action. (3) Loud, disruptive talking by other students in the classroom. According to Berger, students expect faculty members to take immediate action when disruptions occur in the classroom.¹³ Throughout the program (first, third, and fourth years), students rated prolonged chattering as the fourth most uncivil behavior. Only 30.9% of first-year students, 54.1% of third-year students, and 45.1% of fourth-year students claimed to participate in chattering. (4) Rude comments or gestures can create annoyance, discomfort, and fear on the part of both students and faculty members. Respondents agreed that offensive remarks were uncivil. Making offensive remarks was considered the third most uncivil behavior

by students both in their first and third years and the second most uncivil behavior by the time they reached their fourth year. Few students admitted to making such remarks (Table 2).

The other top uncivil behaviors according to the students surveyed were cheating in the classroom and using a cell phone or beeper in the classroom (Table 2). These were considered uncivil for obvious reasons. Cheating has an extremely high potential for punishment. Using a cell phone or beeper directs complete attention and focus on the student participating in this act. According to deterrence theories, those incivilities with more severe consequences or punishments are less likely to occur.¹⁵ This is one explanation of why there was little participation in these uncivil activities by students. Few students admitted to cheating or using a cell phone or beeper in the classroom (Table 3).

Chewing gum, drinking, and eating in class were ranked the least uncivil behaviors by students (Table 2). These least uncivil behaviors were participated in highly. An overwhelming majority of students had chewed gum, drank, and eaten in class (Table 3). These actions involve students fulfilling physiological needs that are important

to them and are therefore viewed by others as more acceptable as implied by Maslow's hierarchy of needs.¹⁶

There were several significant differences in students' views on classroom incivility in their first, third, and fourth years. Specifically, their view on cheating, sarcastic remarks/gestures, shuffling backpacks/papers, dominating classroom discussion, and eating and drinking in the classroom changed over the course of the program. During their fourth year, students found it significantly less uncivil to cheat than they did during their first and third years. Although their beliefs were different, students' self-reported actions did not significantly differ. Few students admitted to cheating in the classroom. Students in their fourth year had participated the least in cheating compared to when they were in their first and third years (Table 3). This significant difference may be due to the increasing difficulty in the curriculum. In other words, by their fourth year, students may have found it more acceptable to cheat to achieve passing or desired grades, but they were still unlikely to participate in this action because of the severe consequences.

Respondents believed that sarcastic remarks/gestures were significantly more uncivil when they were first-year students than they did as fourth-year students (Table 2). This may be attributed to the fact the first-year students were still new to pharmacy school, and did not know their professors as well as they did by the time they were fourth-year students. By their fourth year, students had come to know the pharmacy professors better, which may have made the students feel that such sarcastic remarks/gestures were more acceptable. However, fourth-year students reported participating less in making sarcastic remarks/gestures than they did during their first and third years. This suggests that although they saw this behavior as being less uncivil than they had 2 years before, they still knew they were expected to behave professionally.

Fourth-year students believed that shuffling backpacks/papers and dominating discussion were significantly more uncivil than what they believed during their first year (Table 2). More than likely, the fourth-year students were closer to becoming pharmacists and had a better understanding of the need to pay attention to class and its importance. Instead of packing up their notebooks minutes before the lecture session was over, fourth-year students were still listening because they knew they might miss important information. At the same time, dominating a discussion did not give one a chance to learn from others. Fourth-year students were more aware that listening and participating (rather than dominating) were important in classroom discussion.

As mentioned before, fourth-year students believed that eating and drinking in the classroom were less uncivil

behaviors than what they believed during their first and third years (Table 2). Eighty-three percent of fourth-year students admitted to eating in class compared to 53.7% of students in their first year, and 45% of students in their third year ($p = 0.03$). Also, 93.9% of fourth-year students admitted to drinking in class compared to 74.3% in their first year and 89.4% in their third years ($p < 0.01$, Table 3). Fourth-year students had been in the same classroom environment for the past 3 years, and felt more comfortable to eat and drink in the classroom. Also, fourth-year students may have faced more time constraints with a more rigorous professional program compared to their first and third years, which may have forced them to eat and drink in the classroom more often.

Students in their fourth year, who were closest to becoming professionals, were expected to pay attention to teachers and be ready to participate in class. However, this was not necessarily the case. During their first year students were significantly less likely to participate in prolonged chattering, disapproving groans, being unprepared for class, avoiding eye contact, eating in class, and drinking in class compared to when they were third- and fourth-year students (Table 3). This may have resulted from students being more comfortable with their classroom environment during their third and fourth years. They knew what actions were more tolerated by certain professors, and may, therefore, have participated in them more often. The first-year students were more unfamiliar with the college environment and larger classroom atmosphere. The students were significantly more likely to participate in challenging the teacher's knowledge during their first and third years compared to during their fourth year. By their fourth year, students had gotten to know their teachers better, and had more of an understanding of their knowledge base. Also, fourth-year students may have discussed topics with their teachers in a more professional manner as a learning lesson, rather than a challenge.

In addition, survey respondents indicated preferences for classroom atmosphere and professors' actions. Specifically, this study confirmed that students preferred professors who were more immediate in their behaviors. Defined by Boice, immediacy is "the extent to which the teacher gives off verbal and nonverbal signs of warmth, friendliness, and liking such as smiling and making eye contact."¹⁷ In their first, third, and fourth years, students indicated that the professor's caring attitude was their most important preference. Berger reinforced this thought of caring attitude in the classroom by stating that positive motivators and immediacy tend to decrease classroom incivilities. However, without a caring classroom environment, students may have felt that teachers

were cold or uncaring and may have actually deserved classroom incivilities. Immediacy behaviors on the part of faculty members also include lecture style, involvement outside the classroom, available office hours, willingness to be contacted outside of class, and handling questions during class.¹³ Responses indicated that all students preferred the professors to be accessible by contacting them by e-mail, visiting during office hours, or talking with them after class (Table 3). During their first year, students found it more important to e-mail teachers with concerns or talk to teachers after class. They may have found it more important to visit teachers during office hours because they were not used to a college classroom in general as compared to a high school classroom. High school classrooms are generally smaller and provide more individualized attention, while college classrooms, such as the general education classrooms many first year students are in, are generally larger, which would lead to less individualized attention. This might explain why first-year students found it more important to seek outside personal attention (ie, talking to a teacher after class).¹⁸

All students slightly agreed (a 4 on a Likert scale of 1-5) that they deserved more attention because they were attending a private university. This follows the model of students being consumers of education. They may feel as if they were owed something for the monetary investment in their education. If that is the case, professors work for students not the university.¹³ However, this is not always found to be true. If teachers are working for students, then that would mean the students possess more power over the professors. Instead, the students surveyed felt that professors had power over students as opposed to students having power over professors. According to Berger, the more power professors have in the classroom the more respect they will receive and incivilities should decrease. However, students who feel powerless are more prone to uncivil behavior.¹³ Thus, professors must be in charge of the classroom situation, but not to the point of making students feel powerless (Table 3).

Other classroom preferences of students that significantly differed between their first, third, and fourth years were: (1) preferring a teacher with pharmacy experience and (2) preferring a teacher of the same race. Third- and fourth-year students were in the professional program, which was more pharmacy specific, compared with first-year students who were taking more general education classes. The third- and fourth-year students may have preferred a teacher with pharmacy experience compared to during their first year because they appreciated having a teacher with experience, which may be more advantageous. As for preferring a teacher of "my own race," the fourth-year students had been attending the school longer

and were exposed to more diverse faculty members including some who do not speak English fluently.

Faculty members have the right and responsibility to define inappropriate behavior in the classroom. The professors' expectations and requirements should be provided in the course syllabus to avoid any confusion as to what is or is not considered uncivil behavior. Both first- and third-year students indicated that they nearly always read the course syllabus, which was more so than during their fourth year. By their fourth year, students had learned what expectations certain professors had and did not feel the need to thoroughly read the course syllabus. All students reported that they did not read the student handbook as much. Often, incivilities can be prevented if students understand what the professor and university expect (Table 3).

Limitations

This study was conducted only at ONU with no other pharmacy colleges participating. Thus, results are not generalizable to all pharmacy students. ONU's pharmacy program is based upon students being admitted immediately following high school for 6 years of professional study. Many other pharmacy colleges include 2 years of prepharmacy followed by 4 years of professional study. In this situation, students may be older than ONU students and may have had undergraduate experience before attending pharmacy school. This could influence their opinions concerning classroom incivility. In addition, students were only surveyed during their first, third, and fourth years. Students in their sixth year may have different opinions because they are no longer in the classroom, and instead are participating in nine 1-month clinical experiences at various health care sites.

Also, for items concerning participation in uncivil behaviors, information about the time period during which the students engaged in the behavior was not solicited. Students' reported uncivil behaviors may have occurred at any time during their education, but it was assumed most students responded with the current year of pharmacy education in mind. Another limitation is the fact that ONU does not have a diverse student population as previously described. Minority groups were not adequately represented so evaluation of differences in beliefs among minority students concerning classroom incivility and preferences was not possible.

CONCLUSIONS

Significant changes occur in pharmacy students' perceptions of incivility over the course of their academic career, as well as in their preferences on classroom matters.

Students maturing both personally and professionally as they progress through the pharmacy curriculum could likely influence these changes. This study will help pharmacy educators understand and prevent classroom incivilities. A future survey will be conducted to learn incivility issues and preferences from the educators' point of view.

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