

## Faculty Staff versus Nurse Students' Perceptions Regarding Uncivil Behavior in the Classroom

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### Abstract

**Background:** Uncivil behavior of a student is a very serious problem in higher education. It changes the teaching and learning environment by diverting both student and faculty staff attention away from the lecture, disrupting the discussions and has negatively consequences on the learning outcomes. **The aim of the study:** assess the faculty staff and nurse students' perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom. **Research design:** A descriptive, comparative cross-sectional design was used to carry out this study. **Setting:** The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing –Ain Shams University. **Subjects:**101 faculty staff and 261 nurse students. **Tools:** Data were collected by using incivility in nursing education questionnaire sheet. **Result:** Faculty staff had the highest perception level regarding aggressive behaviors while nurse students had the highest perception level regarding disagreeable behaviors. **Conclusion:** There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse students' perception regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom. **Recommendations:** enhancing rules and policies, specifically student codes of conduct. Faculty staff have to enhance positive relationships through professional role modeling and use zero tolerance technique to prevent the uncivil behavior's occurrence.

**Key words:** Faculty staff, nurse students, uncivil behavior in the classroom.

### Introduction

Uncivil behavior of nurse students interferes with academic achievement and leads to a decline curve of ethics for nurse students. (*Ibrahima & Qalawa, 2015*). Uncivil behavior among students is very serious problem and rising in higher education. Classroom uncivil affect the teaching and learning environment negatively by diverting student attention away from the course work, disrupting topical discussions, altering the dynamics of the learning environment and negatively influence their allegiance to the college or university (*Gallo, 2012*).

Uncivil is defined as "rude or disruptive behaviors which often 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 injuries or illness and uncivil acts by student nurses ranging from aggressive verbal confrontations to threats against physical safety" (*Clark, Olender, Kenski & Cardoni, 2013*).

Uncivil has broad range of behaviors in students such as eye rolling, coming session late, physical threats, and violence. However, uncivil in nursing education

divided into disruptive and threatening behaviors. Disruptive behaviors include avoidance, disregard for others and violation of ethics, while threatening behavior include aggressive and disagreeable behaviors (*Dzuree and Bromely, 2012*).

Both student and faculty episodes, stress has been considered to contribute greatly to these uncivil behaviors, and that frustration, associated with the poor teaching practices of the faculty staff, stress is the main source of student uncivil behaviors. These high stress levels are clearly evident when difficult course content is taught and students perceive that faculty did not make the course easy for them to get through (*Beck, 2015*).

Physical environment and large class sizes are contributing factors to uncivil behavior. The physical environment is an important factor that contributing to uncivil behavior and an emphasis on how they affect learning processes and learning outcomes (*Week, 2011*). Physical environment is important to determine how much they improve or hinder students' behavior in the classrooms (*Apter, 2014*). For example noise level is an issue when looking at how noise affects student behavior on students and faculty staff. Classrooms should be a comfortable place to acquire knowledge (*Zannin et al., 2013*).

Uncivil affects the learning environment, creating distrust in the faculty staff-student relationship. It frequently erupts during the challenge created when poor performance on the part of the student necessitates criticism from the faculty. Moreover, uncivil cause erodes self esteem, damages relationships, increases stress, contaminates workplace and rise into violence (*Schaeffer, 2013*).

All the faculty staff as a result from student uncivil behaviors have harmed emotionally or physically. Harmed emotional

effect such as scared, worried, intimidated, threatened, stressed, distressed, upset, defeated, and sad. Furthermore, negative impact the uncivil behavior had on their relationship with a student or group of students. Harmed physical effects such as migraines, bowel disorders, and inability to sleep (*Sprunk, Lasala & Wilson., 2014*).

The faculty staff should help student grow professionally because professional behavior and civility are intertwined, professionalism will be included as one of the workshop sessions for direct attention to the nurse student's duty to exemplify the professional behavior, the collective voice of the registered nurse workforce can be strengthened (*Sprunk et al., 2014*).

Faculty staff can discourage uncivil behavior by moving around the classroom to engage students' attention. A remote control allows faculty to move from behind the podium and control the computer or advance a slide show from anywhere in the classroom. Pausing respectfully near any inattentive or disruptive students and making belief eye contact, as if talking with them, can also be effective (*Russell, 2014*).

### **Aim of the study:**

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**This Study aimed at** assess the faculty staff and nurse students' perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom.

### **Research Question**

- Is there a difference between the faculty staff and nurse students perceptions regarding uncivil behavior in classroom?

### **Subjects and Methods** **Research design**

A descriptive comparative cross-sectional design was used to carry out this study.

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### Setting

The study was conducted at Faculty of Nursing –Ain Shams University.

### Subjects

The subjects for the study included two groups, namely nurse students and faculty staff groups.

#### - First group: Faculty Staff:

- 101 faculty staff out from 136 was eligible to participate in the study.

#### Second group: Nurse Students:-

- 261 nurse students out from 825 was eligible to participate in the study at academic year 2017/2018..

Sample size was calculated using Open Epi, Version 3, and open source calculator taking into consideration that the sample size was calculated with confidence level of 95% and a power of 80.0% and based on a study carried out by (*Ibrahim & Qalawa, 2015*)

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{Z^2 \cdot x \cdot (1-x)}{d^2}$$

$d^2$

(*Jaykaran and Tamoghna, 2013*)

### Data collection tools

One questionnaire sheet was used for data collection.

\* **First tool: incivility in Nursing Education (INE) Questionnaire:** It aimed to assess faculty staff' perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom. It consists of two parts:

**Part I:** This part focus on collecting data pertaining to demographic

characteristics of faculty staff as age, years of experience, qualification...

**Part II:** This part was developed by (*Clark, 2009*) and adopted from (*Mahmoud, 2015*).It consists of 40 statements grouped under two sections. Disruptive behaviors include (24 items). While, threatening behaviors include (16 items).

#### ➤ Scoring system:

Responses of participants were measured on 5 points likert scale ranged from *very civil, civil, uncertain, uncivil, and very uncivil*. Very civil was scored as "5", while very uncivil was scored as "1".The positive words got reversed score. All items are summed up and a mean score is calculated.

Perception level of study subjects is considered low if total score was less than 60%. While it considered moderate if score was ranged from 60-75% and it considered high if total score more than 75%.

### Operational Design:

The operational design for this study included three phases namely: preparatory phase, pilot study and field work.

#### Preparatory phase:

This phase started from July 2017 till September 2017, the researcher reviewed the national and international related literature, the material in textbooks & scientific journals were used in the study to acquainted with study subjects.

#### Pilot study:

The aim of pilot study was to test the clarity of study tool, objectivity, feasibility, and their relevance to study. It also helped to estimate the time needed to complete the data collection sheets. A pilot study was conducted at September, 2017. The time for

filling the questionnaire took around 30-45 minutes. 27 nurse student and 11 of faculty staff were included in the pilot were excluded from the main study sample.

**Field work:**

The fieldwork of the study extended through the first semester of the academic year (2017-2018). It took two months started at the beginning of October 2017 and was completed by the end of November 2017. The researcher introducing herself to faculty staffs in the workplace then explain the aim & component of questionnaire sheet and distributed the questionnaire sheet to faculty staff in their work settings at different times and return at the end of day. Also, the researcher introduce herself to nurse students in the classroom then explain the aim |& components of the questionnaire sheet. The researcher arranged with course coordinators from different grades for determining the suitable time to collect the data. The researcher divided each grade of the nurse students into groups to collect tool in their classrooms or during break time or in post pore lecture two days / week. The researcher checked each questionnaire sheet to ensure its completion.

**Administrative Design:**

Before starting on the study, official and formal letters were issued from the Dean of Faculty of Nursing, at Ain Shams University to the head of each scientific department, the letter explained the aim of the study and its implications and for support seeking.

**Ethical consideration:**

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Prior to the actual work of research study, ethical approval was obtained from the Scientific Research Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Nursing at Ain Shams University. The subjects were informed about their right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and that the collected data will be kept confidential. Informal consent was obtained from each participant in the study.

**Statistical Design:**

The data collected were revised, coded analyzed, tabulated and statistical by using number and percentage distribution. Chi square test was use d for comparisons between qualitative variables. Student t-test was used to assess the statistical significance of the difference of a parametric variable between means of two study groups (two independent group means).

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### Result:

**Table (1):** Demographic characteristics of the studied faculty staff (n=101).

Characteristics of the studied faculty staff		No.	%
Age(years)	<40	44	43.6%
	40-50	46	<b>45.6%</b>
	>50	11	10.9%
Academic Position	Lecturer	52	<b>51.5%</b>
	Assistant Professor	33	32.7%
	Professor	16	15.8%
Marital status	Single	31	30.7%
	Divorced	5	5.0%
	Married	51	<b>50.5%</b>
Years of Experience	Widow	14	13.9%
	<15	51	<b>50.5%</b>
	15-25	39	38.6%
No of courses taught this year in undergraduate program	>25	11	10.9%
	<3	93	<b>92.1%</b>
Attending training courses about uncivil behavior	>3	8	7.9%
	Yes	13	12.9%
	No	88	<b>87.1%</b>

**Table (1):** describes that demographic characteristic of faculty staff included in the study. According to the table, 51.5% of the faculty staff were lecturer, as regards, aged, 45.6% of them had age ranged between 40-50 years. In addition, 50.5% of them were married. 50.5% of the faculty staff yours experience was less than 15 year. Furthermore, 92.1% of them taught about less than 3 courses in the academic year. Finally, 87.1% of faculty staff didn't attend training course regarding uncivil behavior.

**Table (2):** Characteristics of the studied nurse students (n=261).

Characteristics of the studied students		No.	%
Gender	Male	118	45.2%
	Female	143	<b>54.8%</b>
Academic Year	1st Year	62	23.8%
	2nd Year	70	<b>26.8%</b>
	3rd Year	67	25.7%
	4rth Year	62	23.8%
Residence	Rural	132	<b>50.6%</b>
	Urban	129	49.4%
Residence in Student Hostel	Yes	111	42.5%
	No	150	<b>57.5%</b>
Rank between Brothers	Oldest	155	<b>59.4%</b>
	Middle	65	24.9%
	Youngest	41	15.7%
No of Brothers	<3	111	42.5%
	>3	150	<b>57.5%</b>
Hobbies	Yes	108	41.4%
	No	153	<b>58.6%</b>
Student choice to join the faculty	Yes	148	<b>56.7%</b>
	No	113	43.3%
No of Transportation	<3	131	<b>50.2%</b>
	>3	130	49.8%

**Table (2):** indicates that, 54.8% of nurse student were females. As regards, academic year, 26.8% of them were in second year and 50.6% of nurse student live in rural area, 57.5% of nurse student don't live in student hostel. In addition, 59.4% of them were oldest among their brother and 57.5% of them had more than

three brothers. As regard 58.6% didn't have any hobbies , 56.7% of them joint the faculty by choice and 50.2% of them need less than 3 transportation to arrive the faculty.

**Table (3):** Comparison between faculty staff and nurse students' Perception regarding total disruptive behaviors.

Disruptive behaviors	Studied subject				Student t-test	P-value
	Faculty Staff		Nurse Students			
	Mean	± SD	Mean	± SD		
Avoidance behaviors	<b>78.60</b>	5.16	<b>66.19</b>	17.82	10.197	0.000**
Disregard of others behaviors	73.20	4.02	68.40	18.69	5.786	0.000**
Violation of ethical behaviors	73.37	2.47	66.62	16.93	6.270	0.000**
<b>Total Disruptive Behaviors</b>	73.97	2.39	67.01	14.81	7.342	0.000**

(\*\*) Highly statistically significant at P<0.01

**Table (3):** presents that, faculty staff had highest score than nurse student regarding avoidance behaviors. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding all items reflecting total disruptive behaviors.

**Table (4):** Comparison between faculty staff and nurse students' Perception regarding total threatening behaviors.

Threatening behaviors	Studied subjects				Student t-test	P-value
	Faculty staff		Nurse Students			
	Mean	± SD	Mean	± SD		
Aggressive behaviors	85.38	2.49	68.49	18.37	14.511	0.000**
Disagreeable behaviors	<b>88.12</b>	8.39	<b>71.01</b>	20.62	11.220	0.000**
<b>Total Threatening behaviors</b>	86.41	3.71	69.44	17.46	14.859	0.000**

(\*\*) Highly statistically significant at P<0.01

**Table (4):** presents that, faculty staff had highest score than nurse student regarding disagreeable behaviors. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding all items reflecting total threatening behaviors.

**Table (5):** Comparison between faculty staff and nurse students' Perception regarding total uncivil behavior in the classroom.

Dimensions	Rank				Student t-test	P-value
	Faculty staff(n=101)		Nurse Students(n=261)			
	Mean	± SD	Mean	± SD		
<b>Total perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom</b>	<b>78.94</b>	2.37	<b>67.98</b>	14.75	11.621	0.000**

(\*\*) Highly statistically significant at P<0.01

**Table (5):** presents that, faculty staff had highest total mean than nurse student regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding all items reflecting total uncivil behaviors in the classroom.

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**Table (6):** Comparison between faculty staff and nurse students' Perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom.

Dimensions	Perception level	Studied subjects				Chi square	P-value
		Faculty staff		Nurse students			
		No.	%	No.	%		
<b>Total Disruptive Behaviors</b>	<b>Low</b>	0	0.0%	90	34.5%	57.115	0.000**
	<b>Moderate</b>	79	78.2%	103	39.5%		
	<b>High</b>	22	21.8%	68	26.1%		
<b>Total Threatening behaviors</b>	<b>Low</b>	0	0.0%	71	27.2%	113.468	0.000**
	<b>Moderate</b>	0	0.0%	91	34.9%		
	<b>High</b>	101	<b>100.0%</b>	99	<b>37.9%</b>		
<b>Total perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom</b>	<b>Low</b>	0	0.0%	89	34.1%	112.000	0.000**
	<b>Moderate</b>	7	6.9%	90	34.5%		
	<b>High</b>	94	93.1%	82	31.4%		

**Table (6):** presents that, there were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom.

**Table (7):**Relationship between faculty staff' demographic characteristics and their perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom (n=101).

faculty staff' demographic characteristics		Perception level						Chi square test	P-value
		Low		Moderate		High			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
<b>Age(Years)</b>	<b>&lt;40</b>	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	42	44.7%	2.616 FE (#)	0.296
	<b>40-50</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	43	45.7%		
	<b>&gt;50</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	9	9.6%		
<b>Academic Position</b>	<b>Lecturer</b>	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	49	52.1%	1.218 FE (#)	0.669
	<b>Assistant Professor</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	31	33.0%		
	<b>Professor</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	14	14.9%		
<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Single</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	29	30.9%	1.653 FE (#)	0.641
	<b>Divorced</b>	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	5.3%		
	<b>Married</b>	0	0.0%	3	42.9%	48	51.1%		
<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Widow</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	12	12.8%	0.695 FE (#)	0.745
	<b>&gt;15</b>	0	0.0%	4	57.1%	47	50.0%		
	<b>15-25</b>	0	0.0%	2	28.6%	37	39.4%		
<b>No of Course taught this year in an undergraduate program</b>	<b>&gt;25</b>	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	10	10.6%	0.418 FE (#)	0.449
	<b>&lt;3</b>	0	0.0%	6	85.7%	87	92.6%		
	<b>&gt;3</b>	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	7	7.4%		
<b>Attending training courses about uncivil behaviors.</b>	<b>Yes</b>	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	12	12.8%	0.013 FE (#)	1.000
	<b>No</b>	0	0.0%	6	85.7%	82	87.2%		

**Table (7):** shows that, there was no statistically significant relation between faculty staff demographic characteristics and their perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom.

**Table (8):** Relationship between nurse students' demographic characteristics and their perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom (n=261).

Nurse students' demographic Characteristics		Perception level						Chi square test	P-value
		Low		Moderate		High			
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Male</b>	45	38.1%	38	32.2%	35	29.7%	1.565	0.457
	<b>Female</b>	44	30.8%	52	36.4%	47	32.9%		
<b>Grade</b>	<b>1st Year</b>	18	29.0%	18	29.0%	26	41.9%	12.344	0.055
	<b>2nd Year</b>	27	38.6%	28	40.0%	15	21.4%		
	<b>3rd Year</b>	27	40.3%	25	37.3%	15	22.4%		
	<b>4th Year</b>	17	27.4%	19	30.6%	26	41.9%		
<b>Residence</b>	<b>Rural</b>	46	34.8%	50	37.9%	36	27.3%	2.398	0.302
	<b>Urban</b>	43	33.3%	40	31.0%	46	35.7%		
<b>Residence in Student Hostel</b>	<b>Yes</b>	35	31.5%	45	40.5%	31	27.9%	3.178	0.204
	<b>No</b>	54	36.0%	45	30.0%	51	34.0%		
<b>Rank between Brothers</b>	<b>Oldest</b>	57	36.8%	45	29.0%	53	34.2%	8.360	0.079
	<b>Middle</b>	18	27.7%	25	38.5%	22	33.8%		
	<b>Youngest</b>	14	34.1%	20	48.8%	7	17.1%		
<b>Hobbies</b>	<b>Yes</b>	39	36.1%	40	37.0%	29	26.9%	1.790	0.409
	<b>No</b>	50	32.7%	50	32.7%	53	34.6%		
<b>Student join the faculty by choice</b>	<b>Yes</b>	52	35.1%	49	33.1%	47	31.8%	0.307	0.858
	<b>No</b>	37	32.7%	41	36.3%	35	31.0%		
<b>No of Transportation access to reach the faculty</b>	<b>Less than 3</b>	49	37.4%	46	35.1%	36	27.5%	2.170	0.338
	<b>More than 3</b>	40	30.8%	44	33.8%	46	35.4%		

**Table (8):** presents that, there was no statistically significant relation between nurse students' demographic characteristics and their perception of uncivil behavior in the classroom.

## Discussion

Civility must be a major characteristic of higher education, especially nursing education. Although, it is apparent that uncivil is on the rise and increasingly becoming an issue of concern for all the major stakeholders in the learning environment. As uncivil has a negative impact on everyone involved (*Mahmoud, 2015*).

Regarding disruptive behaviors, the present study results revealed that faculty staff had high total mean score than nurse student regarding total disruptive behaviors. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding disruptive behaviors. This might be due to faculty staff aware how to control of disruptive behaviors to prevent convert to threatening behaviors.

Agreed with *Mohamed (2016)* who carried out a study to explore the perception of nursing student and faculty members regard uncivil behaviors and found that faculty members had high perception level toward disruptive behaviors.

Regarding threatening behaviors, the present study results revealed that faculty staff had high total mean score than nurse student regarding threatening behaviors. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student' perception regarding threatening behaviors. This might be due to faculty staff not accept any act lead to threat, take the action directly understand the generation differences.

On contradicted with *Abdelkader et al., (2012)* faculty members and nursing

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students that had the high perception regarding aggressive behaviors.

Regarding perception of total uncivil behaviors, the present study results revealed that faculty staff had highest total mean score than nurse student regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom. There were highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse student ' perception regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom. This might due to faculty staff had highly awareness about any acts interrupt them during lecture as uncivil behavior and may be converting to more threats on life of student and others and disrupt of learning process.

On the same line *Herrnin, (2014)* who conduct a study in USA to determine if there were generation related differences regarding uncivil be as observed and perceived nursing faculty and found that faculty members had high perception of uncivil be in an academic setting.

Regarding relation between faculty staff demographic characteristics and their perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom, the present study results showed that there was no statistically significant differences between faculty staff characteristics and their perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom. But observed that more than three quarter of faculty staff not attended the training courses about uncivil behaviors. This result may be awareness of faculty staff regarding uncivil behaviors and its influenced by other factors related to academic environment, nursing students, and societal factors.

The present study showed that more than half of lectures had high perception compared to professors and assistant professors regarding uncivil behaviors. This result may be due to lecture is the person always deals with students directly and more engaged in the undergraduates classroom rather that professors and assistant professor

regularly to engaged in the undergraduates classroom.

Regarding relation between nurse students' characteristics and their perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom, the present study results showed that there was no statistically significant differences between nurse students' characteristics and their perception regarding uncivil behavior in the classroom but observed that more than one third of female students had high perception than male students. This reflect our cultural customs which revealed that females are more quite than male especially that more than half of nurse student from rural areas. On the same line, *Nordstrom et al., (2009)* founded that male students were more likely to report engaging in uncivil behaviors compared to females.

The present study observed that more than one third of first and fourth grade students had high perception than second and thirds students. This result may be due to first year grade had the readiness to follow the policies and rules or fear from discipline system. While fourth grade had more experiences of student as uncivil behaviors and may become more respectful their faculty staff and other students.

## **Conclusion**

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The study findings concluded that faculty staff had highest total mean scores than nurse students regarding disruptive & threatening behaviors. Faculty staff had highest perception level than nurse student regarding total uncivil behaviors in the classroom. There was highly statistically significant difference between faculty staff and nurse students' perception regarding uncivil behaviors in the classroom. This answered the research question which stated that is there a difference between faculty staff and nurse students' perception regarding uncivil behaviors in the classroom?

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**Recommendation:**

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In the light of the present study findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

-The faculty should discuss the student's behavior with a classmate to set a support and provide thoughtful reflections.

-Enhancing policies, specifically student codes of conduct, that is more prescriptive regarding civility and responsive to identify uncivil behaviors.

-Faculty staff should attend training programs, seminars and workshops about uncivil behaviors and how to manage it?

-Use conflict management to be able to handle disagreements, accept individual differences and discover conflict.

-The faculty staff should remain calm, maintain eye contact, physically move away from the students, and use touch appropriately to refocus the student.

-Faculty staff have to foster positive relationships through professional role modeling through trust, mutual recognition, respect, rewards and praise to create classroom norms, and support joint accountability in order to promote civility within the learning environment.

-Students' right regarding the learning environment should be disseminated.

-The students should be committed adhered the code of conduct for nurse students such as the code of ethics includes coming to faculty prepared, on time, and ready to learn, be engaged in the discussion of the classroom and show respect for self and others.

Recommendation for further research: -  
Assessing the effect of uncivil behaviors on the quality of learning environment.

-Investigate the effect of uncivil behaviors on student achievement/ performance.

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**Conflict of interest:**

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No      Yes

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