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AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FACE LOSS AND STUDENT AGGRESSION: THE CASE STUDY OF MOHAMMED I UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract
This research study addresses the influence of face loss on students' aggressive behaviours among Mohammed I University students in Oujda. The study examines how teachers' and peers' face-threatening acts affect students' aggressive behaviours. Using the mixed-methods research design, the research questions explore if face loss affects students' aggressive behaviours, how and to what extent face loss can cause a student to behave aggressively towards teachers and classmates, and the motive behind their aggressive behaviours. Data were collected using a survey that included 243 participants and interviews with 28 students who had experienced classroom face loss. Interview data were coded, and thematically analysed and survey data were quantitatively analysed. Both survey and interview data reveal that face loss does affect students' aggressiveness towards their teachers and peers. Such aggressive behaviours include physical and verbal abuse, direct and indirect aggression, and passive forms of aggression. The results also indicate that classroom face loss leaves students with negative attitudes towards their teachers, peers, and school subjects. Recommendations suggest further research vis-à-vis facework strategies employed by teachers to minimize student face loss and classroom embarrassment.

Keywords: classroom embarrassment, face loss, facework strategies, face-threatening acts, student aggression, teachers

Introduction

Recently, schools in Morocco have witnessed a tremendous increase in students with aggressive behaviours. Teachers and school staff have been struggling to find ways to deal with aggressive students. This mixed methods study is designed to investigate the influence of classroom face loss on students' aggressive behaviours towards their teachers and classmates. While most of the penalties and sanctions implemented by schools around the country have not been successful in minimizing incidents of student aggression, this study sets forth to uncover the underlying reasons and the nature of students' aggressive behaviours against teachers and peers, which can help teachers and school staff understand the incentives of such behaviour, and thus implement ways to deal with it.

Aggression among high school adolescents takes many forms. It can be physical or verbal, direct or indirect, and active or passive. Baron (1977) defines aggression as a form of behaviour aimed at harming or injuring other individuals. Moreover, aggression is an external behaviour (Bushman & Huesmann, 2010) characterised by its underlying motivation to harm another being, whether or not the damage was done (Krahé, 2013).

Aggression has been extensively studied by psychologists. According to Baron (1977), the psychoanalytical and ethological approaches led by Sigmund Freud and Konrad Lorenz respectively, consider aggression as behaviour that is largely instinctive. However, this instinctive view of aggression was quickly dismissed by the majority of researchers, especially with the emergence of the *drive theories of aggression* which took the lead and maintained that aggression "stems mainly from the arousal of a drive to harm or injure others. Within this framework, Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939) advanced their volume *Frustration and Aggression,* in which they maintain that frustration always precedes aggression and that the latter is the outcome of the former (Baron, 1977).

While the proponents of the aggression-frustration theory suggest that aggression is the result of frustration (Baron, 1977; Morlan, 1949), impression management theory explains that the basic determinant of aggression is perceived intentional attack. That is when an individual senses that his or her self-image is under attack, this individual will respond aggressively or retaliate to save face and restore a positive to his/her image (Felson, 1978, 1982). Relevant to this idea, Baron and Richardson (1994, p.146) maintain that:

> The desire to maintain a favourable impression may affect aggressive responses in several ways. First, a person may be especially likely to retaliate in response to an attack when other people are present. Second, a victim may want to avoid looking like a loser. So, if the victim cannot deny being hurt, then he or she may try to restore a positive image by retaliating […]. Finally, […] by responding to an attack with an attack of equal or lower magnitude, a person should appear to be fair or justified—a positive image.

Thus, maintaining a positive image is the goal behind behaving aggressively according to impression management. Likewise, in the classroom, students are subject to several instances of embarrassment caused by teachers and classmates' face-threatening acts. Applying the same principle of impression management, these students may become aggressive if they sense that others are attacking them. Hence, they will respond aggressively to save and restore face, especially in front of others.

Against this backdrop, this dissertation assumes that students' aggressive behaviours against their teachers as well as their peers may be affected by a desire to save face. To avoid face loss, these students may show various forms of aggression to save and restore face and avoid being embarrassed.

Background to the concept of face

In his seminal article "On face work", the sociologist Erving Goffman defines face as "an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes … face is the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (Goffman, 1982, p. 5). A careful

examination of this definition will make a lot more sense. All people, for example, want to be seen as having "a social value", and the way to do that is through linguistic or non-linguistic codes they use when interacting. Goffman explains that a *line* is a person's verbal and nonverbal behavioural patterns through which that person articulates his or her point of view of the situation, and evaluation of others and himself (1982).

Teachers, for instance, want their students to perceive them as competent and effective educators. Likewise, students want to be seen as hardworking and serious learners. Through the *line* (like in a script of a play) that they use, people form an image of themselves and at the same time, others form an image of them. In other words, it is through interaction that our face is constituted, and images of the self and others are formed. As Redmond (2015, p. 4) puts it, "Our face is primarily displayed through behaviours—the way we communicate and interact."

Similarly, face is "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). Interestingly for Goffman, however, the face is not solely a private matter; instead, it is a social and public value that is "on loan to him from society and will be withdrawn unless he [or she] conducts him- or [her]self in a way that is worthy of it" (1982, p. 10). Interestingly although Brown and Levinson claim that their notion of face is "derived from that of Goffman" (1987, p. 61), researchers maintain that there is a distinction between their definition and Goffman's. By defining face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim himself" (1987, p. 61), Brown and Levinson seem to describe face as an image and attribute that fundamentally belongs to the individual, to the self (Mao, 1994; Terkourafi, 2007). On the other hand, Goffman (1982, p. 7) does not see a person's face as "something lodged in or on his body", but as existing in the "flow of events in the encounter", and "on loan from society" and that if a person is not worthy of such value, it will be taken from him or her. Thus, Goffman sees face not just as a private value but as a public and social value as well.

Within the sociological framework, the concept of face is mostly associated with Goffman who "based much of his work on interpersonal relationships on face;" however, the concept was first introduced to Western thinking by the Chinese anthropologist Hu Hsien Chin in 1944 (Scollon & Scollon, 2001, p. 44). Additionally, the face was discussed in the works of Arthur Smith—an American missionary who, after spending a considerable amount of time studying and observing aspects of Chinese life, viewed face as a "dramatic concept of Chinese social life and the balance of face as an end goal in settling a conflict" (Jia, 2001, p. 69). That said, Goffman did not describe the concept of face in the Chinese context as did Smith; in fact, Goffman borrowed the term *face* from its Chinese origins and used it to sketch out a systematic theory that incited research on face and facework across various disciplines. Accordingly, while the term face has its roots in Chinese culture, interest in the face should not be restricted to the Asian or Chinese culture as it is indeed a universal phenomenon found in individuals from all societies and cultures (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Qi, 2011).

Face and face needs

The roots of politeness in all cultures reside in the notion of face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In this regard, the concept of face was expanded and divided into two aspects—positive and negative face. Positive face is a person's desire to be

appreciated and approved of by others, while negative face is the want or desire of everyone to be 'unimpeded' by others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Put differently, a positive face is a person's desire to be liked and admired by others, whereas a negative face is a person's desire to be free and not imposed on by others. Fulfilling positive and negative face needs is equally important to a person's face. In the classroom setting, for example, when a teacher is about to explain the lesson, he or she would like the students to respect his negative face by not doing anything that may disrupt the process of explanation, while concurrently developing an admirable image of him or her—a positive face need.

For Lim and Bowers (1991), B&L's positive face encompasses two distinct human wants, namely the desire to be liked and included and the desire that one's achievements and abilities be respected and approved. For them, the desire for inclusion and the desire for respect are two distinct human needs (1991). Thus, they developed a model of face wants maintaining that humans have three distinct face wants: *fellowship face, competence face* and *autonomy face*. *Fellowship face* refers to the want or needs to be included, *competence face* is a want to have one's abilities respected, and *autonomy face* refers to people's want not to be imposed on others. Significantly, this model resembles that of Brown and Levinson in the sense that *fellowship face* and *competence face* belong to the realm of positive face as they both focus on a need or a want to be viewed by others positively and desirably. On the other hand, the *autonomy face* may be closely related to the negative face as it focuses on a desire to be free and autonomous.

Important to both models is the willingness of participants to protect each other's face wants and feelings. As Goffman maintains, "Just as the member of any group is expected to have self-respect… [so] he is expected to go to certain lengths to save the feelings and the face of others present… because of emotional identification with the others and with their feelings (1982, p. 10). Likewise, since one's facial concerns are sustained only by others and people's face is mutually vulnerable, it is in people's best interest to cooperate in maintaining face interaction (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Craig et al., 1986).

However, in contrast to such ideal situations in which all participants of an interchange or interaction are willing to protect each other's face, there are countless situations wherein interactants try to wound their interlocutor(s) and officially and purposefully attempt to utterly destroy the other's face (Goffman, 1982). Such situations occur when people commit speech acts that are by their nature face threatening.

Face-threatening acts and face loss

An interesting explication of how one's face may be threatened is advanced by Goffman and further illustrated by Brown and Levinson (Cupach & Metts, 1994). To be *out of face* means to lose face in various situational circumstances. "A person may be said to be out of face when he participates in a contact with others without having ready a line of the kind participants in such situations are expected to take (Goffman, 1982, p. 8). In other words, a person may lose face when he or she interacts with others in unexpected ways that strike them as odd. Embarrassing predicaments can also cause individuals to feel awkwardness "because they threaten the identities that individuals desire to portray, and consequently lead to a

temporary break-down in the ordinarily smooth and routine contours of social interaction" (Cupach & Metts, 1994, p. 18).

People are expected to behave in a certain manner to maintain their social image, so when an individual behaves in a manner that causes him or her to lose face, the other interactants often experience uneasiness and discomfort, too. As Kim and Nam (1998, p. 526) maintain "a person's face loss can negatively affect not only the individual but also the social encounter itself." This issue is particularly pressing in the individualist vs collectivist cultural dimensions. Since collectivist cultures emphasize group harmony, saving others' faces is a priority for people in such cultures. In contrast, people in individualist cultures are concerned with their self-face needs even at the expense of others' face needs.

Researchers seem to agree one's face is vulnerable and that losing face is a damaging and hurtful social event to the person concerned who is likely to feel ashamed and inferior because of what may happen to his reputation as a participant (Brown & Levinson 1987; Goffman, 1982; Ho et al., 2004). Face is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 61). In this regard, they discuss acts that are threatening to the face by maintaining that any communicative behaviour that runs contrary to the face needs of the hearer and/or the speaker is termed a *face-threatening act* (FTA, hereafter). Furthermore, they make the distinction between acts that threaten positive face and those that threaten negative face. When an individual's feelings of liking, affiliation or competence are being threatened, we can speak of a positive face threat, but when an individual's autonomy and freedom are threatened, we can speak about a negative face threat (Frisby et al., 2014). More specifically, Brown and Levinson (1987) further distinguish between acts that threaten the addressee's face and those that threaten the speaker's face by outlining a comprehensive account of FTAs.

On the one hand, acts that seem to threaten the *addressee's positive face* include but are not limited to *criticism* or *ridicule, reprimands, complaints, insults, disagreements, challenges, interruptions* and *accusations.* On the other hand, acts that seem to threaten the *addressee's negative face* include but are not limited to *offers, requests, suggestions, advice, reminders, threats, promises, offers, compliments* and *warnings*.

As for the speaker, the distinction is between acts that damage the *speaker's positive face* and those that offend his/her negative face. First, the acts that directly damage a speaker's positive face include *apologies*, *acceptance of a compliment, confessions, admissions of guilt, emotional leakage*, (e.g., uncontrollable laughter) or *crying*, etc. Second, the acts that offend a *speaker's negative face* include *expressing thanks, excuses, acceptance of offers, unwilling promises* and *offers*, etc. It should be stressed, as Brown and Levinson themselves have, that there is no clear-cut division between the above-mentioned acts as some FTAs intrinsically threaten both negative and positive faces (1987).

Classroom face loss and facework

Since "the basic purpose of schools [and classrooms] is achieved through communication" (Cazden, 1979, p.144), the potential of face loss is higher as students are in constant interaction among themselves and with the instructor. On the one hand, students' face loss can be triggered by teachers' performance of

various FTAs. In this regard, researchers maintain that the professional role of teachers gives them the right to perform face-threatening acts such as controlling students' freedom of action, evaluating their performances and utterances (often negatively), and giving them critical feedback as well as interrupting their work and talk (Bills, 2000; Cazden, 1979). These actions performed by teachers threaten both the negative and positive faces of students. For example, constraints on freedom of action threaten students' negative or autonomy face whereas evaluations of their actions threaten students' positive or fellowship and competence face (Bills, 2000). Kerssen-Griep et al., (2003) note that teachers' evaluations or feedback of students' work is the most complex type of FTAs in the classroom as it contains multiple face threats. On the other hand, students might lose face when they are subject to episodes of intentional or unintentional embarrassment. When a person is embarrassed, he or she experiences discomfort and awkwardness. In this sense, we can say that when an individual is embarrassed, he or she loses face.

In the classroom setting, when a student experiences embarrassment, s/he feels discomfort and humiliation because of failure to present a desired self-image to his or her peers and teachers (McPherson & Kearney, 1992). On his part, Martin (1987, p. 279) posits that "embarrassment develops unintentionally and spontaneously in the flow of interaction and is caused by a loss of poise". Goffman defines poise as "the capacity to suppress and conceal any tendency to become shamefaced during encounters with others" (1982, p. 9).

Thus, when a student fails to hide his or her hurt feelings (i.e., loses poise), s/he experiences embarrassment (flushing, flustering, etc.,) and ultimately loses face. A case in point is the fact many students shun asking questions during classroom discussions for fear of being perceived or judged as ignorant or mindless. Similarly, most students hesitate to give answers to questions in class because of fear of being wrong, which might show how foolish they are. Another situation that may cause discomfort and uneasiness is when students study foreign languages. While some students struggle to speak the language, others seem only interested in mocking and belittling any attempt by other students to form a sentence or convey an idea in a foreign language. As a result, most students avoid such situations so as not to feel embarrassed and lose face in front of classmates and teachers. That said, depending on the circumstances, the degree of embarrassment may differ from one student to another, from one class to another and from one school to another.

Generally speaking, people tend to avoid face-threatening and embarrassing predicaments, but when such situations inevitably happen people are motivated to correct the situation and save face through the process of facework (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Goffman, 1982). Facework encompasses the sum of communication strategies used by people to establish, maintain and restore a desired social image to others during interaction. Facework refers to the speaker's actions to neutralize threats to face and maintain or save face (Goffman, 1982). For Goffman, "to save one's face" appears to refer to the process by which the person sustains an impression for others that he has not lost face (1982, p. 9). Domenici and Littlejohn (2006) define facework as "a set of coordinated practices in which communicators build, maintain, and protect personal dignity, honour, and respect". An important aspect of facework is that it "deals with norms beyond linguistic and para-linguistic politeness" (Bargiela-Chiappini & Haugh, 2003, p.1465). That is, facework involves all the verbal and nonverbal face-saving strategies used by speakers to

maintain or restore their face whenever it is threatened. Moreover, it should be stressed that the mechanisms of facework are culturally specific, which is why it is observed that different cultures do facework differently (Domenici & Littlejohn, 2006).

As the first to conceptualize a theoretical framework of facework, Goffman suggested two processes of facework, namely the *avoidance* process whereby a speaker attempts to prevent the threat to the face and the *corrective* process by which a speaker attempts to restore a state of equilibrium or save face (1982). Given the choice, most people will try their best to avoid situations where their faces might be threatened. But, when individuals fail to avoid face-threatening incidents, they proceed to correct the situation. The avoidance process involves *defensive measures* and *protective manoeuvres*. Defensive measures include *changing the topic of the conversation, presenting a front of diffidence* and *composure, suppressing any show of feeling*, etc. As for the protective manoeuvres, the person may *show respect* and *politeness*, *employ discretion* or *circumlocutions, joke, give courtesies and overlook* or *turn a blind eye to some threatening acts* (Goffman, 1982, pp. 16-18, emphasis mine).

On the other hand, the corrective process involves four classic moves; the first move is the *challenge* in which the participants assume the responsibility of bringing order to the situation or interchange by calling attention to the misconduct. For example, if you arrive late to an appointment, your friend might ask you why you were late. The second move is the *offering* in which the offender, or the responsible for the threat, is offered a chance to fix things through apologies, explanations, justifications and so on. *Acceptance* is the third move in which the offended persons can accept the offering of the offender which leads to the *thanks* as the final stage whereby the forgiven person shows gratitude to the persons who have forgiven him or her (Goffman, 1982, pp. 20-22). However, it is noted that if the offender is unwilling to rectify the situation, the offended persons could "resort to tactless, violent retaliation, destroying either themselves or the person who had refused to heed their warning" (Goffman, 1982, p. 23).

Within classrooms, facework "provides, for teachers and students, a means to respect others' desired identities—and gain support for one's own—while communicating face-threatening messages (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2003, p. 362). As noted above and even though it is the nature of their work that forces them to perform FTAs, teachers are also required to create an atmosphere that promotes respect and admiration. This can be done through the use of facework strategies to minimize the threat imposed by the FTAs. Accordingly, teachers, as rational agents, "will soften their FTAs with some form of redressive action; and their strategic choices can be described as versions of positive or negative politeness styles, or as going off-record." (Cazden, 1979, p. 148). Likewise, teachers are observed to use positive politeness strategies to gain control of their classes and negative politeness strategies to gain cooperation from the students (White, 1989).

What is more, research suggests that instructional facework behaviours that respect students' autonomy, competence and fellowship identity need to enhance their intrinsic learning motivations (Kerssen-Griep et al., 2003).

To conclude, the interactive nature of the classroom engenders situations where the students may lose face either because of the acts performed by their instructor or by their peers. In general, face loss can be damaging to the students

and the learning process itself and can negatively influence students' intrinsic motivation to learn. However, facework helps lessen the intensity of face threats while communicating one's ideas to others. When the avoidance or corrective processes are ineffective on their own, the interactants "make points" thereby engaging in the aggressive use of facework in which speakers are no longer in cooperative undertaking but in a contest wherein each interactant is trying to score as many points as possible against the adversary (Goffman, 1982). Based on the research reviewed above, losing face in the classroom may affect students' aggressive behaviour. While I could not find any previous research that explicitly and directly investigated the influence of face loss on students' aggressiveness, several issues explored above demonstrate the likelihood of such a connection. Therefore, I assume that face loss in the classroom will most likely affect students' aggressive behaviour. Thus, this dissertation seeks to answer three main questions. First, does face loss affect students' aggressive behaviours? Second, how does face loss affect students' aggressive behaviours, that is, what type of aggression is manifested by embarrassed students? And finally, why do students who lose face behave aggressively?

Method

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of face loss on classroom aggressive behaviour of the students of English at the University of Mohammed I in Oujda. Based on this and given the complex nature of this investigation and the fact that it seeks to understand the deep emotional reactions of individuals, the idea of relying only on a quantitative or a qualitative approach seemed insufficient. Therefore, the thought of mixing quantitative and qualitative methods became evident as the study progressed. This study was conducted in phases; in the first phase, a survey was distributed online to students at Mohammed I University in Oujda. In the second phase, interviews were conducted to supplement and refine the data collected through surveys.

Design

Since I opted for mixed methods research, the design should enable me to incorporate or integrate both quantitative and qualitative data in the study (Cresswell, 2012). With that in mind, the mixed methods design was chosen since this study attempts to unravel the correlation between variables and examine the influence one variable exerts over the other. Among the six types of mixed methods research designs, this study opted for the Explanatory Sequential Design which is the most popular design for education research (Cresswell, 2012). Also known as the two-phase model, the explanatory sequential mixed methods design entails collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain and refine the quantitative results. This design prioritizes quantitative data collection and analysis by starting with it first in the sequence and followed with a qualitative component to refine and further explore the quantitative results. One of the advantages of this design is that it has clearly defined stages of data collection and analysis, which is beneficial for the researcher and the reader alike (Cresswell, 2012).

Participants

Participants were undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students of English at Mohamed 1st University. The participants (n=243) consisted of 127 females (52%), and 116 males (48%), with ages ranging from 17 to +29. The choice of the target population was due to the availability and ease of access to the participants.

Sampling

The current study used different sampling methods for quantitative and qualitative data collection. For the quantitative data collection phase, convenience and snowball sampling were used. Surveys were distributed to a small population of participants who were willing and available to be studied with the condition of being a student or a former student of English at Mohamed 1st University, regardless of their semester or academic year. These participants were then asked to share the survey with others who were willing to participate. For the qualitative data collection phase, two types of purposeful sampling were used. Snowball sampling was used to recruit a heterogeneous group of students as participants in this study. Additionally, confirming and disconfirming sampling was used to reach individuals who experienced embarrassing predicaments in the classroom to deepen the enquiry and reach an in-depth understanding of the influence of face loss on students' aggressive behaviours towards their teachers and peers.

Instruments

This study used a survey for quantitative data collection and interviews for qualitative data collection. In addition to demographics, the survey contained two sections. The first section assessed participants' face loss level whereas the second section measured the forms of aggression manifested by participants towards their teachers and peers after experiencing an embarrassing or humiliating incident in the classroom. The second section of the survey, which was concerned with self-sensitivity to face loss, used an adapted version of the Face Loss scale (FL Scale) developed by Zane (1991, 2000) to measure students' self-assessed sensitivity to face loss in different situations. The participants rate their agreement with each item using a 5-point Likert-type scale with higher scores indicating greater concerns towards losing face. The scale consists of statements like "I am more affected when someone criticizes me in public than when someone criticizes me in private" and "When I meet other people, I am concerned about their expectations of me," all of which aimed at measuring students' self-assessed sensitivity to face-threatening situations. The third section of the survey, which assessed the link between FL and aggression, contained questions that aimed at assessing students' aggressive reactions following FTAs performed either by teachers or classmates. Each question focused on a specific aspect of student aggression such as frequency, student-aggressive reactions towards teachers and classmates, physical aggression, verbal aggression, and indirect and passive aggression. In addition, the survey included a question about the motives that push students to behave aggressively towards teachers or classmates' FTAs.

As for the qualitative phase, interviews were used to examine embarrassed students' motives for behaving aggressively and their feelings about the subject, teachers and classmates. Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, the interviews took place

over the phone using video call technology. In addition to recorded responses, the researcher took written notes. Participants were asked to describe a situation in their school career when they were intentionally embarrassed by either teachers or their classmates. Participants were asked (a) to describe the incident, (b) to explain how they reacted to the embarrassed and the embarrassing situation, and (c) to report if they witnessed a similar incident happen to one of their classmates or friends and how they dealt with it. In addition, participants were asked (d) about why embarrassed students behave aggressively (i.e., what is their goal behind behaving aggressively?). Finally, interviewees were given the chance to express their feelings about the entire classroom face-loss experience and how it impacted their perceptions of school, teachers and classmates.

Procedure

The data collection procedure was conducted in two phases. Following the explanatory sequential design, the first phase is quantitative and the second is qualitative. The quantitative phase of this investigation used a three-section survey to measure students' self-sensitivity to face loss in different situations and to determine how losing face and embarrassment may affect students' aggressive behaviour. Upon receipt and processing of the quantitative data derived from the students' survey responses, a subsequent data collection process was conducted via interviews. To clarify, the quantitative data was initially gathered and scrutinized, followed by the acquisition and examination of qualitative data, culminating in a comprehensive interpretation based on the integration of both data types.

Ethical considerations

The participants received a similar treatment during the data collection stage and no group was favoured over another. All the participants were informed of the objectives of this study, and that their input will be used for research purposes only. As a result, participants were free to participate or not and no one obliged them to do so. Additionally, participants were assured of anonymity and that any information provided during the interviews would be strictly confidential. No names were mentioned during the data analysis and participants were given arbitrary codes for identification.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Demographics (quantitative data)

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Participants' gender		**Participant's age**			
Females	Males	17-20	21-24	25-29	Above 29
127	116	82	93	52	16

Face loss data

Concerning participants' self-sensitivity to face loss in different situations, the participants were divided into two groups: those with High Face Loss levels (HFL) and those with Low Face Loss levels (LFL). The total of participants with higher sensitivity to face loss exceeds those with lower sensitivity to face loss.

Among the 243 participants, 135 were found to have HFL based on the revised FL scale, whereas 108 were found to have LFL. More specifically, 56 % were identified as having a high face loss level or HFL, while 44 % were identified as having a low face loss level or LFL.

Frequency of aggressive behaviours towards teachers' FTAs

Investigating the frequency of students' aggressive behaviours towards teachers' FTAs was the focus of the first question in the face loss and student aggression survey. Concerning the HFL and LFL groups, the majority of the participants in both groups do not frequently engage in aggressive behaviours. Concerning gender, females' and males' scores indicate that females engage in aggressive behaviours less frequently than males.

Frequency of aggressive behaviours towards peers' FTAs

The second question in this survey investigated the frequency of students' aggressive behaviours towards peers' FTAs. The HFL group scores show that the majority of students indicated that they "sometimes" aggress their peers if they sense some threats to face, whereas a minority would "always" engage aggressively towards their peers. For the LFL group, scores show that the students with LFL react differently from each other. As for females, a major part of the scores show that females refrain from reacting aggressively towards their peers. Conversely, males' scores show that they are more likely to react aggressively towards their peers' FTAs.

Student aggression towards teacher's FTAs in public

The third survey question is concerned with investigating the effect of *public* face threats on the student' aggressive behaviours towards their teachers. Scores of the HFL group show that they tend to ignore and forget about the incident and show more understanding of their teacher's actions than the scores of their LFL counterparts, which show that they are less likely to forget or understand the teacher's actions and that they are more likely to react aggressively if their teacher threatened their faces. For females and males, the scores seem rather similar except for the options "aggressively*"* and "understand," in which males score higher in the "aggressive" option and the females score higher in the "understand" option. this indicates that female students tend to show more understanding towards their teachers' FTAs than male students who are more likely to react aggressively to their teachers' issued FTAs.

Student aggression towards teacher's FTAs in private

The fourth survey question investigated students' aggressive behaviours towards teachers' *private* FTAs. Scores of both HFL and LFL groups show that they understand and are less likely to react aggressively when embarrassed in private. For the other options, the scores are more or less evenly distributed except for the "aggressive" reaction where the score of the LFL group is slightly higher. Similarly, scores of female and male participants indicate that they are more likely to understand the teacher's act instead of reacting aggressively. In addition, while the LFL group scores higher in the option "aggressively", females score higher in the "ignore" option.

Student aggression towards peers FTAs in public

The HFL group results show that the majority preferred to ignore the incident altogether while a small number of participants chose to react aggressively if and when a peer or classmate threatened their face. Conversely, scores of the LFL group indicate that half of the participants would react aggressively, while a minority chose to ignore the peer's FTAs. Likewise, while the majority of female participants would ignore the event, a small number of females chose to react aggressively. In contrast, males seem more likely to react aggressively than to ignore the event. It is noted that a minority of participants in all the groups are likely to 'understand' their peers' acts.

Aggressive reactions towards peers FTAs in private

Scores of the HFL group indicate that the group's first choice is to ignore the incident followed by an aggressive reaction, show understanding of peers' act and/or forget about it. On the other hand, the LFL group results indicate that their immediate response was to react aggressively and then ignore the event and very few participants were ready to understand or forget about the incident. As for females, scores show that if their face is threatened in private, they are more likely to react aggressively than to ignore the event. Additionally, males' first choice was to ignore the act followed by an aggressive reaction. For both females and males, few participants showed readiness to understand their peers' FTAs in private.

Physical aggression towards teachers' FTAs

Considering physical aggression, results show that the vast majority of participants with HFL tend to forget about or ignore the incident. It is noted that nearly all HFL participants shun being physically aggressive towards their teachers even if the latter embarrassed them. As for the LFL group, their scores also show that the majority prefers to forget about the event, with more participants who are more likely to physically aggress their teachers compared with the HFL group. For females, scores indicate a similar outcome as the HFL group. The vast majority chose to forget or ignore the incident. Similarly, males' results also show that they tend to forget and ignore the incident, but with an increase in the number of participants who are willing to be physically aggressive.

Physical aggression towards peers' FTAs

In the same respect, question eight surveyed students' physical aggression towards peers' FTAs. The scores of the HFL group indicate that the majority of participants chose to forget and ignore the incident, while only a handful of participants are likely to physically aggress their peers if they threaten their faces. As for the LFL group, their scores show that more participants are likely to physically aggress their peers and fewer participants are willing to forget about the incident. For females, scores show that most of the participants tend to forget and ignore the incident, while only a few participants tend to be physically aggressive towards their peers' FTAs. Conversely, males are less likely to forget or ignore the incident and tend to be more physically aggressive towards their peers' FTAs.

Verbal aggression towards teachers' FTAs

Out of the 135 participants with HFL, 29% (n=39) chose to talk back to their teachers; 19% (n=26) chose to ignore the event and 50% (n=70) tended to forget about their teachers' FTAs. Conversely, the LFL group's results indicate that 56% (n=60) chose to respond and talk back to teachers' FTAs, whereas 27% (n=29) chose to forget about it and 18% (n=19) chose to ignore the incident altogether. For females and males, scores show that males are more likely to talk back to teachers' FTAs while females are more likely to forget about it.

Verbal aggression towards peers' FTAs

As for verbally aggressive behaviours towards peers' FTAs, 44% (n=60) of participants in the HFL group chose to ignore their peers' FTAs; 35% (n=47) of them tended to threaten or call their peers names and 21% (n=28) chose to forget about the incident. In contrast, the vast majority of participants in the LFL group decided to threaten and/or call their peers' names, whereas some of them chose to ignore the FTA and only a few forgot about it. For females, scores indicate that ignoring the incident is the first choice followed by responding aggressively either by threatening or calling their peers names. As for male participants, results show that responding aggressively is the first option followed by ignoring and forgetting about the peers' FTAs.

Indirect aggression towards teachers' FTAs

The participants were given the question: *if your teachers embarrass you, do you spread nasty rumours about them?* The scores show that the vast majority of HFL students answered negatively; only a few answered positively and a third of the participants in the same group ignored the incident. In addition, scores show that 68% of participants with low sensitivity to face loss (HFL) answered negatively; 17% of students with low sensitivity to face loss (LFL) answered with a *yes* and 18% chose to *ignore* the incident. As for females, scores indicate that most of the participants answered with a *no*, while few participants chose *yes,* and one-quarter of female participants chose to ignore the teacher's FTA. Similarly, scores also show that 63% of males answered negatively, 17% answered positively and 20% chose to ignore the teacher's FTAs.

Indirect aggression towards peers' FTAs

As for indirect aggression towards peers' FTAs, scores of both groups show that most of the participants tend to avoid spreading rumours about their peers even if they caused them embarrassment. That said, some participants in both groups (the LFL group having the higher percentage) are likely to spread rumours about their peers if they threaten their faces. As for the third option, one-quarter of participants in both groups (the HFL group having the higher percentage) chose to ignore their peers' FTAs. Additionally, female and male results show almost identical scores as most female and male participants answered negatively, while few participants answered positively.

Incentives for reacting aggressively towards classroom FTAs

The last question in the face loss and aggression survey examined the motives that push students to behave aggressively if and when they are embarrassed. The

scores that 37% (n=196) of the participants chose the option *to save face or self-image*, 24% (n=127), chose the option *to avoid embarrassment*, 23% (n=120), chose the option *to embarrass others*, and 10% (n=54), opted for the option *to show off*. The majority of participants consider face-saving to be the most important motive for behaving aggressively. That is, when embarrassed students behave aggressively, their actions are primarily motivated by the urge to save face. In addition, most of the participants believe that by reacting aggressively, they can avoid embarrassment and embarrass their original embarrassment.

Experiencing face loss in the classroom (Qualitative data)

This subsection describes the qualitative data gathered using interviews. The 28 interviews allowed more detailed information to be collected about participants' opinions, feelings and attitudes about classroom face loss. Indeed, participants' insights and attitudes towards classroom face threats and face loss deepened our understanding and helped uncover significant insights regarding the influence of face loss on students' aggressive behaviours of Mohammed I University students of English in Oujda.

The first question in this semi-structured interview aimed to uncover participants' past experiences of classroom face loss. Accordingly, participants were asked to recount any situation where they were embarrassed by teachers or classmates. To begin with, all of the participants expressed that they have experienced classroom embarrassment and face loss. Although the feeling of embarrassment is shared among the interviewees, each student had a unique experience that impacted his or her studies.

Some participants reported that when they answered a question or participated in classroom activities, they were laughed at by teachers or classmates, which made them feel deeply embarrassed and ultimately lose face. "I was yelled at by the teacher because I gave an incorrect answer," said one of the interviewees. Another participant reported that because the teacher thought she was challenging his ideas by asking too many questions, the teacher ignored her and did not give her a chance to participate anymore. "At first, I didn't care, and I kept raising my hand, but eventually I knew I was banned from participation, which made me feel embarrassed, especially as everyone knew what was going on," said the student.

Furthermore, some participants stated that the teacher accused them of doing something and insulted them in front of the whole class. Although the student tried to clarify the matter by saying that it was another student who did it, the teacher did not listen and started shouting and told him to get out. Likewise, a participant reported that she was yelled at by a teacher who thought she was chewing gum. Unfortunately, the student had the habit of biting her nails and she kept saying I have no gum, but the teacher did not believe her and thought the student was trying to trick her. Eventually, the student was told to leave the classroom.

Similarly, a student recounted that once during a test, she was stressed out and could not answer a question. Hence, she started drawing on scrap paper because it was her hobby, but then the teacher took the drawing and showed it to the others saying "This clown will laugh at you when you get a zero." "At that moment I felt deeply embarrassed because everyone was laughing at me," said the student. Another participant described how she was embarrassed and deeply offended in

front of her classmates when the teacher accused her of cheating on the test, which she did not do as she was one of the hardworking students.

In the same vein, other participants reported that they felt embarrassed when the teacher called them to the board to answer a question to which they could not provide an answer. The participants said that in normal circumstances that would not have been so embarrassing but in this particular case the teacher knew they could not answer and yet insisted that they give the answer, which put the whole session on hold and soon other students burst into laughter, which was not in any way funny but embarrassing.

Other participants stated that they refrain from participating and have to think twice before discussing ideas in the classroom so as not to get laughed at by their classmates. They said that other students keep harassing them each time they make a mistake.

Students face loss experiences and aggressive behaviours

All of the participants stated that their reactions were dictated either by the gravity of the embarrassment or by the student's unique personality. That is, the more severe the embarrassment the more aggressive the students' reaction becomes. By contrast, while some students only became aggressive if they were backed into a corner, other students reacted aggressively even if the embarrassment was mild.

The participants' reactions varied among avoidance, verbal response, crying, physical aggression, laughter, getting out of the classroom and no reaction at all. When embarrassed, most of the participants reported that they either responded verbally and defended themselves or did not show any reactions whatsoever. They defended themselves against teachers' embarrassment when they felt that they were wrongly accused. Some of the participants reported that they argued with the teachers on several occasions when they did not do anything wrong. In contrast, a large number of participants said that they did not show any reaction when they were embarrassed because they did not want to show any weaknesses. "I just kept silent and tried not to show others I was deeply hurt," said one of the participants. Also, the participants who showed no reaction said that in the future they avoided their teachers as much as possible.

Other participants stated that once they were embarrassed by their teachers in the classroom they simply started crying and left the classroom. As the data show, the majority of students who started crying right after they were embarrassed were female students. Surprisingly, one participant mentioned that whenever she was embarrassed, she burst into laughter instead of crying.

Two participants reported that they became furious when they were humiliated and embarrassed by teachers' words to the extent that they felt the urge to throw things at them, slam the classroom door or hit anything to show how angry they were. Fortunately, this did not happen often.

It is noted that all of the participants said that once they were embarrassed by their teachers in front of other students, their relationship with their teachers was never 'normal' again. All of them tried to avoid the session as much as possible and some of them never attended that teacher's class except if they had a test.

Contrary to teachers' face threats, the majority of the participants stated that they had no problem responding to face threats committed by their classmates. While some participants immediately responded in kind to other classmates'

teasing, others said they waited until the session was over and resolved the issue. Similarly, nearly all participants mentioned that if classmates attempted to embarrass or mock them in the classroom, they would avenge themselves either by repaying the embarrassment or engaging in a physical confrontation.

It is also worth mentioning that gender differences do play a key role in deciding whether a face threat from a classmate is worth reacting to or not. As reported by some participants, male students may consider threats to face from other male classmates as hostile but will not regard similar face threats as hostile from female classmates. For example, most male participants stated that they would ignore a face threat committed by a female student. Conversely, if the face threat is committed by male classmates, they would certainly react aggressively towards them.

Discussion

Student aggression towards teachers' FTAs

With regards to HFL students, the results seem to be in line with the characteristics of such students, who are observed to be more aware of their facial needs and show consideration towards the needs of others' faces. Therefore, it is unlikely that they will aggress others or threaten their faces. By contrast, LFL students are consequently less aware of their face needs and may not have any consideration for others' faces. Such students threaten others' faces without hesitation because they may not be aware of the others' face needs in the first place. As Goffman (1982) maintains, a person will have two points of view—a defensive orientation towards saving his face and a protective orientation towards saving others' faces. (14). It can be inferred from this that students with high sensitivity to FL tend to lean more towards a protective orientation, that is, they are inclined to save their faces and others' faces as well. Conversely, students with low sensitivity to FL tend to lean towards the defensive orientation, that is, they are concerned primarily with saving their face.

Regarding female and male students, results indicate that male students tend to aggress their teachers more frequently than female students. This can be explained by the fact that males' and females' biological differences influence them differently. It can also be explained that females are more likely to perceive aggression as inappropriate behaviour and feel guilty and anxious in connection to aggressive acts (Frodi et al.,1977).

Moreover, interview responses indicate that students' aggression may be partially triggered or magnified by their traits. For instance, a student who is always angry and characterised as irritable and easily provoked will always respond aggressively to teachers' FTAs no matter how trivial the FTA may be. However, if a student is composed and exerts self-control, he or she will inhibit the release of aggressive response tendencies (Krahé, 2013). Additionally, another factor that may influence the magnitude of students' aggressive behaviours is the fact that some students are characterised as *ruminators.* That is, they are observed to hold grudges and maintain feelings of hostility for extended periods (Krahé, 2013).

The findings also indicate that public and private face threats do affect students' aggressiveness levels as both HFL and LFL students tend to show understanding when they are embarrassed in private but respond aggressively when embarrassed in public.

That said, although the majority of students with high sensitivity to FL chose to forget about the incident, a substantial number of students in the same group chose to ignore the incident as if it didn't happen altogether. Ignoring the incident is one of the facework strategies known as poise, which was discussed by Goffman (1982, p. 13), who states that by using poise, "the person controls his embarrassment, and hence embarrassment that he and others might have over his embarrassment."

In the same respect, when students were subject to private embarrassment both groups of students showed greater understanding of the teacher's FTAs. This shows how the presence or absence of an audience affects the behaviours of the embarrassed party. In this regard, Baron (1977) maintains that the mere presence of an audience on the scene can have an impact on the magnitude and occurrence of aggression. When others are watching, the embarrassed student may become angrier simply because he or she knows that others are witnesses to his or her humiliation and there is a greater chance that the student may be subject to mockery by peers later. Conversely, when a student is embarrassed in private, nobody witnesses the embarrassing situation and he/she can easily forget about it. On a related note, the fact that some students behave aggressively in front of others may be attributed to the characteristics of the audience itself. As interview responses indicate, students are more affected and therefore behave more aggressively when they are embarrassed in front of the opposite sex. As Borden (1975) suggests, the characteristics and values of those who observe the embarrassment may be a determinant factor in how the student may respond to his or her teacher's FTAs. If the student acts aggressively to the teacher's FTAs and senses that the audience (classmates) 'approve' of his or her behaviour, then the aggression level may increase. But if the audience seems shocked by the student's behaviour, he or she will decrease because the student does not want to lose the respect of his significant others (peers, classmates, friends).

The same thing can be said about the results of female and male students whose aggressive actions also seem to increase when embarrassed in front of others than when embarrassed in private. Again, the student's action is deeply associated with the attitudes that others present show towards their classmate's behaviour. If the student senses the audience wants blood, he or she will revolt aggressively towards teachers' FTAs to impress them. This is similar to Milgram's (1964) experiment in which the suggestions of two accomplices affected the behaviour of the 'naïve' subject who increased the shock levels to please his audience.

As for the occurrence of physical aggression, results show that students with high sensitivity to FL, as well as female students, rarely engage in physical aggression, which is an indicator that these students are aware that behaving in such a way will only further embarrass them. This means that males are inclined to be more physically aggressive than female students. While boys engage in direct aggression hurting their victims physically, girls are more likely to engage in indirect forms of aggression (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). In addition to males, students with low sensitivity to FL seem to engage in physical aggression more than their female counterparts. They oftentimes slam doors or kick tables when they are shouted at or warned in a disgraceful manner by the teacher. Also, some interviewees stated that because some students felt embarrassed, they physically assaulted their teachers, threw things at them and got into fights with them. Severe

as the latter case may seem, thankfully it is only an exception and it rarely happens. Though this behaviour was instigated by the teachers' FTAs, the teachers are not the only ones to blame for such outrageous behaviours. Students who react in this violent manner are usually observed to be undisciplined and disorderly and are always in trouble.

It is noted that one of the reasons these students behave in this manner is related to Greenwell and Dengerink's (1973) idea that students are more likely to engage in physical aggression when they think that their attacker intended to hurt them. This explains why the majority of male students chose to ignore and forget about the incident altogether. They must have felt that although the teacher insulted or shouted at them, he or she had no intention to hurt them. The teacher may have angrily shouted to grab the students' attention to stop disturbing the other students.

As noted earlier, interviewees stated that when the embarrassment is not severe, the students usually forget about it or ignore it and go on with their lives, especially if the embarrassed student did something that got the teacher agitated. Moreover, most students prefer not to respond in a way that shows they are aggressive, for if they do, they will confirm that they are worthy of such embarrassment. This is especially true when the student cares about what others think of him or her and if such a student can control him or herself. Another explanation is that students eschew behaving aggressively against teachers simply because they know that behaviour will be used against them and that it will affect their grades.

Concerning verbal aggression, as expected, the majority of students with HFL chose to forget the incident but nearly a third chose to talk back to and argue with their teachers. This means that even if they are considerate of others' faces, such students do not consider talking back to be as aggressive as slamming the door or kicking tables, etc. Likewise, most female students chose to forget about the embarrassment but some of them also chose to talk back. Again, students may not be interpreting talking back to their teachers as a type of aggression.

On the other hand, the majority of the LFL group and male students chose to talk back and defend themselves against the teacher's FTAs. Interviewees mentioned that they especially argued with the teacher when they were wronged or when they did nothing deserving of embarrassment. Sometimes, some students respond by issuing verbal insults as a defence mechanism when they are provoked. Provocations include insults, verbal and physical aggression and preventing someone from attaining an important goal (Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

Concerning indirect aggression, scores indicate that the majority of students (females, males, HFL and LFL) avoided spreading rumours, which shows that only a handful of students prefer indirect aggression as a reaction to teachers' embarrassment. That said, interview responses showed that a lot of students gossip about their teachers, especially if they had negative experiences with those teachers. Such students usually avoid confrontation and tend to resolve their issues in indirect manners such as spreading rumours and gossiping about others. Although research suggests that female students are inclined to engage in indirect forms of aggression, which damages others' relations and hurts their feelings (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), the results obtained in this study are inconclusive and neither confirm nor disconfirm previous research findings. This may be attributed to the fact that participants did not answer honestly so as not to implicate themselves. On the other

hand, most students may shun spreading rumours about their teachers out of fear of being caught.

Student aggression towards peers' FTAs

The results indicate that students with high sensitivity to face loss do not always engage in aggressive behaviours towards their peers. In contrast, results show that students with low sensitivity to face loss have a greater tendency to aggress their peers. Much like the case with teachers, most aggressive behaviours directed towards peers seem to originate with LFL students. Again, this is consistent with what the literature on face needs suggests. That is, students with higher sensitivity to face loss will only aggress others or resort to aggressive behaviours if the embarrassment or the face threat is severe. However, for students with low sensitivity to face needs, the immediate response is to behave aggressively regardless of the magnitude of the FTA.

For female and male students, the results clearly show that female students refrain most of the time from engaging in aggressive behaviours towards their peers, even if they try to embarrass them or threaten their faces. By contrast, results show that male students will immediately aggress their peers if they sense a threat to face. These results corroborate the fact that male students are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviours than their female counterparts.

Remarkably, students seem to be more readily engaged in behaving aggressively when their face is threatened by a peer than by a teacher. Borrowing the term *hierarchy* from the organizational context, teachers are observed to occupy the highest positions whereas students are ranked in the lower levels of the classroom hierarchy. Therefore, it is only natural that when they are embarrassed by their peers, most students react without hesitation as opposed to their reaction towards teachers.

Moreover, as far as private and public embarrassment are concerned, most students seem to respond aggressively to both cases. In the case of public embarrassment by a peer, LFL and male students chose to respond aggressively, while HFL and female students' number one response was to ignore the FTA. Still, many HFL and female students responded aggressively to peers' public FTAs. Surprisingly, in the case of a peer's private face threat, most LFL and female students responded aggressively. Whereas most HFL and male students chose to ignore their peers' FTAs, some chose to respond aggressively.

The fact that most female students showed aggressiveness towards their peers' private face threats could be explained because women tend to show higher levels of aggressiveness when insulted than when their self-esteem is threatened as opposed to males who become more aggressive when their self-esteem is threatened (Geen, 1998). Private FTAs have little chance of threatening someone's self-esteem because nobody is around to witness the incident; but for public FTAs, there is a huge chance of threatening others' self-esteem.

In the same vein and as far as embarrassment is concerned, private or public embarrassment by a peer does not seem to have much difference with classmates as it did with teachers Again, we can see how power relations are at play here influencing how students respond to their teachers and peers' FTAs. Since students regard their teachers as occupying a higher position than they are, most students think about the ramifications of their behaviours towards teachers. Conversely,

most students automatically attack their peers aggressively if the latter try to embarrass them, simply because they believe they are all equal and that they would not suffer greater consequences for their actions towards their classmates as is the case with their teachers.

Moreover, for most students, being embarrassed by their peers is a matter of dignity and pride. Sometimes students are yelled at or humiliated by teachers for all the good reasons and most students understand that this is part of the teacher's job. Indeed, researchers agree that the nature of the job gives teachers the right to perform FTAs such as controlling students' freedom of action, evaluating their performances (often negatively), and giving them critical feedback as well as interrupting their work and talk (Bills, 2000; Cazden, 1979; Kerssen-Griep, et al., 2003). On the other hand, with peers, most students believe that any kind of face threat issued by their peers is unjustified and deserves a response so as not to be repeated in the future.

Concerning physical aggression, most HFL and female students either ignored or forgot about the incident and only a handful chose to be physically aggressive to their peers' FTAs. For students with low sensitivity to FL and males, the number of students who chose to be physically aggressive is bigger and the number of students who ignored or forgot the FTA is smaller in comparison with the previous group.

With regards to verbal aggression, there is a great tendency for all students to threaten or call their peers names, but at the same time, the majority of students decided to ignore their classmates' face threats. While it is quite normal for students to respond in kind to their peers' embarrassment, the fact that most of the students ignored the FTAs can be interpreted as if students do not give much importance to their peers' face threats. Some students are not affected at all by their peers' FTAs. Another explanation is that most students do not bother to respond to their peers' FTAs because they believe that such individuals are not worth the trouble to respond to and it is better to pretend as if nothing happened. On the other hand, these students might be employing poise to control their embarrassment and avoid being victimized by others.

When comparing the occurrence of physical and verbal aggression towards peers' FTAs to that of teachers, results show that all students tend to be more physically and verbally aggressive towards their peers than teachers. As noted, this may be attributed to the fact that the ramifications of aggressing a classmate are less serious than aggressing a teacher.

In the same spirit, participants' responses indicate that the vast majority of students shun spreading nasty rumours about their peers' as an indirect response to their face threats. This shows that most students do not resort to indirect means to respond as they are capable of responding directly either physically or verbally. Still, few students avoid confrontation and prefer indirect ways to retaliate.

Face loss & student aggression: Does face loss make students aggressive?

The first research question in this study aims to find out if face loss affects student aggressiveness. As indicated by the results, losing face in the classroom does influence the aggressive behaviours of students. Concerning teacher's and peers' FTAs, students' aggressive levels are observed to change according to the

situation in which the FTA was performed and who committed the FTA as well as the student's personality and gender.

Students react aggressively after being embarrassed. The differences between HFL and LFL students in aggressive behaviours demonstrate that students have different interpretations of teachers as well as peers' FTAs. These differences between HFL and LFL affect the magnitude and frequency of aggressive behaviours initiated by both groups depending on their interpretation of the FTAs and their awareness of their face needs and the needs of others' faces.

Although HFL students are more sensitive to face threats, they are less likely to behave aggressively towards their teachers or peers. On the other hand, LFL students are more likely to aggress their teachers and peers if they sense a threat to their face. This difference is attributed to the fact that the former group are more aware of others' face needs, and realizes that reacting aggressively will not just embarrass others but also embarrass themselves. As for the latter group, these students are less aware of others' face needs and rarely think of the ramifications of their actions and hence tend to aggress more frequently.

Also, students' aggressive behaviours may change depending on whether the embarrassment is private or in front of an audience. Most students seem to react more aggressively when embarrassed in front of others, particularly towards their teachers. Moreover, students who are inherently angry and irritable will behave aggressively more frequently than other students. Males tend to be more aggressive than female students either, because of their biological formation or because they are embarrassed in front of the opposite sex and want to show off. Finally, embarrassed students seem to react more aggressively towards their peers' FTAs than towards their teachers' FTAs, mainly since teachers hold more power within the classroom hierarchy and are more likely to retaliate by failing these 'aggressive' students.

The second research question investigated how students' face loss influences their aggressive behaviours. In this respect, the results indicate that students resort to various forms of aggression, namely physical, verbal, indirect and passive aggression. Based on the discussion of the results, most students physically aggress their teachers when they feel that they were intentionally humiliated. Also, students who respond physically are usually aggressive and want to show off in front of other students.

Furthermore, female and male students have different aggressive styles. While males are more inclined to use physical aggression, females avoid being physically aggressive but are inclined to be verbally aggressive. Also, when it comes to peers' FTAs, most students employ a direct aggressive style either physical or verbal. Conversely, when the aggression is directed towards teachers, most students employ an indirect aggressive style, except for cases involving angry and irritable students.

It is worth mentioning that the majority of students resort to passive aggression as a response to others' face threats. When the FTA is committed by the teacher, most students refrain from participating and refuse to take part in the class activities and when the FTA is performed by a peer, most students cut off any relation with these classmates.

The third research question of this study investigated the motives that make students behave aggressively following a face-threatening act. In other words, why

do embarrassed students behave aggressively? The findings of both the survey and the interviews suggest that the most important factor that motivates a student to behave aggressively when embarrassed is his or her desire to save face. Indeed, when one is embarrassed, his or her social identity is at stake and it is at this stage that the embarrassed individual attempts to restore his self-image (Cupach & Metts, 1994; Goffman, 1982). The second most important motive for behaving aggressively when embarrassed is a student's desire to avoid embarrassment in the first place. Moreover, as results indicate in both the interviews and the survey, students show aggressive behaviour not only to avoid embarrassment but also to embarrass their attackers and cause them to lose face. In addition, responses indicate that a minority of students behave aggressively when embarrassed to show off and show others that they can defend themselves against threats.

The findings of this study confirm what previous studies found regarding face loss and embarrassment (Felson, 1978; Metts & Cupach, 1989; McPherson & Kearney, 1992). That is, embarrassed individuals behave aggressively primarily to save and restore face. Besides, when embarrassed individuals sense an attack from others, they resort to aggression to counterattack their original aggressor and avoid embarrassment. In addition to saving face, embarrassed individuals may show aggressiveness to show off and prove their self-worth, especially when they are embarrassed in front of an audience.

Conclusion

The investigation of the influence of face loss in the Moroccan context broadens our understanding of how classroom embarrassment causes students to suffer the misfortune of face loss, which in turn affects how they behave towards their instructors and classmates. I have attempted to demonstrate the influence that face loss has on the magnitude of student aggression towards their teachers and peers. Such influence could be seen through various aggression forms that students resort to save face and restore their self-images. The first research question in this study examined if face loss influences the aggressive behaviours of students towards their teachers and peers. Through the forms of aggression examined in the study, it is crystal clear that when students lose face, they behave aggressively as a reaction to their teachers' and classmates' FTAs. The findings suggest that students with high sensitivity to FL do not frequently engage in aggressive acts as much as students with low sensitivity to FL. Also, the findings show that male students are more likely to engage in aggressive acts than female students. For the second research question, the findings suggest that students may engage in physical, verbal, and indirect aggression. Findings demonstrate that males tend to be more physically aggressive than female students and that both sexes can equally engage in verbal aggression. The most used form of aggression by all students is indirect aggression, mainly towards teachers' FTAs. When embarrassed by peers, however, most students do not hesitate to respond aggressively, either physically or verbally. That said, most students consider teachers' FTAs to be the most embarrassing, especially in front of other students. Through these forms of aggression, embarrassed students attempt to express their dissatisfaction with the ways they have been treated by their teachers and peers. Most importantly, when embarrassed students engage in one of these forms of aggression, their main goal is to save their face and restore their public image, particularly in front of others. Additionally, embarrassed students

behaved aggressively for the sake of avoiding embarrassment and causing embarrassment to the party that attacked them first.

A key limitation of this study is that it looks at the issue of face loss from the point of view of students only. Granted, the findings demonstrate that face loss influences students' aggressive responses in various ways, but the study could not explore the responses of teachers which could have provided more insights into the nature of this influence. Another limitation lies in the sample size of this study. A sample size of 243 participants was a small size sample, which limited the reliability and validity of the study, especially in quantitative findings. A more in-depth analysis could have been possible with a larger sample size, which could have provided more insight into the investigation of the influence of face loss on students' aggressive behaviours towards their teacher's and peers' FTAs. Finally, the findings of this study are limited in the sense that it is hard to generalize them to high school students. As explained in the methodology section, contacting high school students during the time of the COVID-19 lockdown was not possible which is why only university students were enrolled mainly because most of these students have access to the internet and are familiar with online questionnaires and surveys.

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