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Adjustment to College and Perceptions of Faculty Incivility

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Abstract This study assessed the relationships between adjustment and maladjustment to college life and faculty incivility (FI). Two FI constructs were used: Active FI and passive FI. The first includes serious incivilities, such as personal comments or verbal attacks against students; the second pertains to more subtle incivilities, such as inadequate communications and avoidance. Two scales were administered to 744 undergraduate college students: *The College Adjustment Test (CAT)*, and *the Perceived Faculty Incivility Scale (PFIS)*. A paired-samples *t*-test result showed a significantly higher mean result for the passive FI compared with active FI. In addition path model results showed that those who reported higher levels of uncivil encounters in the classroom have also reported an increase in their negative emotional level of adjustment to college life; whereas decreased levels of FI incivility encounters were associated with increased perceptions of adjustment to college. An additional path analysis result has associated maladjustment with passive FI only. Implications of these findings and directions for future research are discussed.

Keywords Faculty incivility · Adjustment to college · Higher education

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Introduction

Broadly defined, classroom incivility is any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere in the classroom (Feldmann 2001). Braxton et al. (2011) note that this phenomenon has intensified, however they do not attribute total blame to student brashness, but rather place emphasis on classroom uncivil behaviors of faculty toward students, such as chronic tardiness and absenteeism, off-color humor, demeaning comments, public humiliation, and other diverse demonstrations of profanity.

Although incivility studies are mainly centered on antecedents and especially outcomes of workplace incivility (Schilpzand, De Pater, and Erez 2015), several studies (e.g., Caza and Cortina 2007) have been devoted to understanding the precursors of faculty incivility (FI) to students' perceptions and implications associated with those perceptions. To date, scholars of academic incivility have focused their attention on defining academic incivility (Berger 2000; Feldmann 2001; Morrissette 2001) and measuring its antecedents, manifestations and responses (Caza and Cortina 2007; Clark 2007; Clark, Olender, Kenski, and Cardoni 2013).

However, despite the mounting reports on FI, none of the previous models has demarcated specific elements of FI, which may be connected to adaptation to university. To address this deficit, our task was to develop a conceptual framework regarding FI contemporary instantiations, adequately operationalize these features, and empirically test their connections to adjustment to college life. Assessing the relations between FI and well-being constructs could give important directions for the establishment of civil interactions between faculty and students. The observation that students' adjustment to college could be partly explained by the teachers' behavior would substantiate the notion that civil behavior is

an important issue that might affect students' well-being and therefore warrants attention.

Theoretical Framework

Incivility Definition

Andersson and Pearson (1999) were the first to introduce the term *workplace incivility* and defined it as a "low-intensity deviant behavior with ambiguous intent to harm the target, in violation of workplace norms for mutual respect" (p. 457). Compared with high intensity and intended interpersonal deviant behaviors, incivility is considered to be subtle, yet a more prevalent expression of interpersonal misconduct, characterized by an ambiguous intent to harm others (Cortina et al. 2001; Pearson et al. 2000; Pearson and Porath 2005). In this definition, *ambiguous intent* implies that one of the parties, either the victim, the perpetrator or a third party observer; perceives the intent to harm as ambiguous. In a recent organized review of the extant body of research on workplace incivility, Schilpzand et al. (2015) indicate three distinct types of incivility: Experienced, witnessed, and instigated. Research in this domain has shown that many of employees who experienced or witnessed an uncivil behavior never officially reported the incident to their organizations (e.g., Pearson, Andersson, and Porath 2000). Regarding instigated workplace incivility, Blau and Andersson (2005) found that distributive justice and job satisfaction were negatively related to instigated workplace incivility while work exhaustion was positively related to such incivility.

Although mainly associated with organizations, *incivility* has been recently extended to include conflictual relationships beyond the classic dyadic between employees and managers in organizations, such as manager – customer relationships (Grandey, Kern, and Frone 2007; Hutton and Gates 2008) and work-to-family conflict, as a potential outcome of incivility perpetrated by managers at the workplace (Lim and Lee 2011). Incivility research has been also extended to include experienced incivility in higher education environments.

Faculty Incivility Definition

Drawing on Pfeffer's (1981) work concerning the salience of social hierarchies in many institutions, Caza and Cortina (2007) advanced the notion that academic institutes share some characteristics with financial organizations due to their organizational settings which are based on hierarchical power structures. Following this line of thought, incivility researchers have focused their attention on uncivil encounters perpetrated by students and/or faculty members in academic settings (Clark 2008; Marchiondo, Marchiondo, and Lasiter 2010). For example, Clark (2007) examined student and faculty perceptions of incivility in nursing education, possible causes of incivility, and potential remedies, using an interpretive qualitative research method. A narrative analysis yielded four categories: In-class disruption by students, out-of-class disruption by students, uncivil faculty behaviors, and possible causes of incivility in nursing education. This study was followed by a quantitative research (Clark 2008) in which data were gathered from nursing faculty and students, using the Incivility in Nursing Education survey. With regard to faculty, uncivil behaviors most frequently cited included making condescending remarks, making rude gestures or comments, and exerting superiority over others. The uncivil faculty behaviors occurring most frequently included ineffective teaching methods, arriving late for scheduled activities, and deviating from the syllabus and changing class assignments.

In a similar route, Marchiondo et al. (2010) examined the effects of faculty incivility on nursing students' satisfaction with their nursing programs. Incidences of incivility, students' responses to incivility, and academic location of incivility were also examined. Findings revealed that a high incidence rate of perceived faculty incivility was reported by the students, which was highly correlated with students' dissatisfaction with the nursing programs.

A more recent quantitative study (Clark et al. 2013) measured for the first time nursing faculty perceptions of faculty-to-faculty incivility. Data were gathered from 588 nursing faculty representing 40 states in the United States. Setting a coworker up to fail, making rude remarks or put-downs, and making personal attacks or threatening comments were reported to be most uncivil behaviors. Whereas the most frequently occurring incivilities included resisting change, failing to perform one's share of the workload, distracting others by using media devices during meetings, refusing to communicate on work-related issues, and making rude comments or put-downs. The factors most likely to contribute to faculty-to-faculty incivility were stress and demanding workloads. Fear of retaliation, lack of administrative support, and lack of clear policies were reported as the main reasons for not appropriately dealing with the problem of incivility.

This new avenue of research has led researchers to redefine incivility with relation to academic settings. For example, Berger (2000) has focused on the characteristics of incivility and defined academic incivility as a "speech or action that is disrespectful or rude" (p. 446). Others emphasized the outcome of the uncivil encounter and defined it as "any action that interferes with a harmonious and cooperative learning atmosphere" (Feldmann 2001, p. 137). Yet, the most prevalent definition was introduced by Morrissette (2001) who viewed academic incivility as an *intentional* behavior which disrupts, or interferes, the learning process of others (Altmiller 2012). By including *intention* in the above definition, academic incivility is thus distinguished from workplace incivility -

characterized by an ambiguous intent to harm the target (Andersson and Pearson 1999). Nevertheless, previous work overlooked the need to generate an operational definition of *intention*. In addition, the above theoretical definition has been recently criticized by (Itzkovich 2014) who raised doubts over the allegedly *unintentional* feature of incivility in workplaces. Similarly, additional efforts to capture the meaning of the uncivil encounters have disregarded intentionality and focused on the victim's perceptions of uncivil encounters in academic settings (Galbraith and Jones 2010) and workplaces (Aquino and Thau 2009).

Emotional Correlates of Academic Incivility

Previous studies on students' perceptions of classroom uncivil encounters and well-being have linked academic incivility to negative emotional and well-being outcomes. For example, higher levels of incivility were negatively associated with attachment to the academic institution and sense of respect toward it (Bjorklund and Rehling 2010; Feldmann 2001). According to Altmiller (2012), students who were exposed to uncivil behaviors of lecturers, have experienced stress, felt disrespected, unprotected and helpless. His study showed that those students avoided interaction with the perpetrator, reduced their help-seeking behaviors and, in general, disconnected themselves from the learning process. In the same vein, Caza and Cortina's (2007) survey of 1,043 university students revealed that over 75 % had experienced uncivil behavior from other members of their institution. Structural equation analyzes indicated that these incivility targets endured psychological distress, dissatisfaction with and disengagement from their institution, and performance decline.

Although the above-surveyed studies address academic incivility as a single-dimension variable, several theorists have categorized it into two major facets. The first includes serious incivilities, such as personal comments or verbal attacks against faculty or classmates; the second pertains to more subtle incivilities, such as sleeping in class (Knepp 2012). These two theoretical categories were previously identified by Berger (2000), who classified them as passive and active incivilities.

Braxton et al. (2011) considered these categories in their work and linked passive incivility of faculty to the pressure placed on them to rapidly and continually publish academic work to sustain or further their career. By using data collected through faculty surveys, the authors describe behaviors associated with undergraduate and graduate teaching which are considered inappropriate and in violation of good teaching practices. They empirically derived a normative structure that consists of inviolable and admonitory norms. Inviolable norms are behaviors viewed by academics as warranting severe sanctions, such as profanity in class; whereas admonitory norms are behaviors that academics believe should be avoided but not severely sanctioned, such as advisement negligence, inadequate communications and inconvenience avoidance. Although not classified as passive incivilities, the admonitory behaviors highly resemble this study's suggested passive FI dimension. Yet, to date, there has been no empirical evidence for emotional and well-being correlates of these dimensions in higher education settings.

The concerns about the consequences of emotional problems related to academic incivility among university students give additional reasons to expect FI negatively linked to a highly studied well-being psychological construct of emotional adjustment to college life.

Adjustment to College Life

College students are in a stage of development often referred to *emerging adulthood* (Arnett and Taber 1994). This period refers to people aged 18–24 who are in transition from adolescence to adulthood (Arnett 2001). In this period, separation and individuation are considered a central developmental task which includes forging a sense of differentiation from immature dependencies and achieving independence from internalized childhood parental images (Alt 2015). Recent generations have delayed many of the events traditionally marking the commencement of adulthood in order to pursue higher education (Arnett and Taber 1994). Students have increasing levels of independence and take on additional responsibilities when reaching college, but most continue to rely on their parents or other adults for important sources of support (Alt and Geiger 2012). Although traditional college students are shielded from many of the responsibilities of adulthood, the transition from high school to university is a stressful event for most young adults, employing student's resources in responding to the academic, social and psychological challenges (Credé and Niehorster 2012; Thurber and Walton 2012). This process comprises making new relationships, modifying existing relationships with family and friends, and facing more complex courses and increased levels of social and academic competition than ever been experienced before (Pennebaker, Colder, and Sharp 1990).

Adjustment to college is described as a multi-level concept representing four facets (Baker and Siryk 1989): Academic, social, and personal-emotional adjustment and student's commitment to the college experience, especially attachment to the particular institution attended. Academic adjustment is associated with motivation for being in college and doing college work; the way in which the motivation is translated into actual academic effort; the efficacy or success of the effort expended; as well as the extent to which the student is satisfied with the academic environment. Social adjustment relates to the perceived success of social activities and functioning in general, satisfaction with the social environment; social interactions in campus; relocation away from home and significant

persons there. Personal-emotional adjustment relates to the sense of psychological and physical well-being. Finally, satisfaction with being in college in general and satisfaction with being at the institution in which enrolled, comprise the 'commitment to the college experience' facet.

There is considerable evidence that the transition to college is a particularly stressful time. Studies show that the extent of affiliation that students feel toward the university is connected to an increased social adjustment (Tao, Dong, Pratt, Hunsberger, and Pancer 2000), decreased depressive symptoms, and higher academic performances (Beyers and Goossens 2002; Brady-Amoon and Fuertes 2011).

Transition to college is often associated with high levels of loneliness, emotional maladjustment and depression, which could negatively affect college performance (Wintre and Yaffe 2000). For example, a study conducted among 276 college freshmen from a university in China (Quan, Zhen, Yao, and Zhou 2014) revealed that loneliness could negatively impact adjustment, directly, and indirectly by activating a negative coping style and suppressing a positive coping style.

Adjustment to college was also found to be connected to several academic outcomes, as shown by Credé and Niehorster (2012). Their study's meta-analytic results indicated that adjustment to college is multidimensional, predictive of college grades and retention.

Student characteristic factors, such as cultural affiliation and gender, have been found related to their level of adjustment to college. These connections were often mediated by the types of interaction between the student and his/her family or friends (Sciarra and Ambrosino 2011; Wang, and Lei 2013). For example, Alt's (2015) study linked the non-coercive and democratic characteristics of authoritative parenting to its superiority in enhancing psychological well-being and higher academic performance among Palestinian-Arab female college students. Similarly, several studies conducted at United States universities, with mainly Caucasian students, have associated authoritative parenting styles with decreased levels of anxiety (Silva, Dorso, Azhar, and Renk 2007), increased levels of optimism (Baldwin, Mclntyre, and Hardaway 2007), and adjustment to college life (Hickman and Crossland 2004).

Although FI and adaptation to college have been investigated in the context of students' well-being, the latter construct has never been used as a perspective for framing an empirically based understanding of academic incivility.

The Present Study

Based on the theory presented above, this study will address active and passive FI features. An effort will be made to 1) determine which of the FI features is more prevalent in the classroom, and 2) assess the connections between these FI factors and adjustment/maladjustment to college life. The emotional problems attributed to academic incivility among university students give reasons to hypothesize FI negatively linked to adjustment, and positively connected to maladjustment to college life (*H1*).

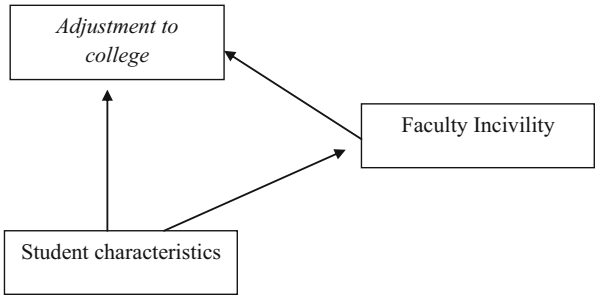

Fig. 1 Model 1. The theoretical structure of the proposed framework

Background variables, such as gender, age, and socio-economic status (SES), will also be addressed in this research to examine their potential effect on the measured variables. Figure 1 demonstrates the theoretical structure of the proposed framework.

Method

Participants

The sample included 744 undergraduate students (17.7 % males and 82.3 % females) from two major colleges located in the Northern Galilee: 40.4 % from college A, and 59.6 % from college B, of whom 39.6 % were Jewish students, 12.1 % Christian students, 37.6 % Muslim students, and 10.7 % Druze students, with a mean age of 24.4 (SD = 4.9) years. The participants' distribution regarding the year of study was: 18 % first-year students, 55 % second-year students, and 27 % third-year students. Based on the reports of the Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) and the Council for Higher Education (2009) in Israel, the gender and ethnicity breakdown of Northern Galilee college students, majoring mainly in social science studies, is 20 % males and 80 % females of whom 40 % Jews, 55 % Muslims, and 5 % belonging to other religions, thus the current study's sample represents, to some extent, the gender and ethnicity breakdown of regional colleges located in Israel. The participants' faculty enrollment breakdown was as follows: Education – 51 %, Criminology – 8 %, Sociology – 11 %, Management - 10 %, Economics – 11 %, Behavioral Sciences - 1 %, Political Sciences -3 %, Engineering – 2 %, Tourism – 2 %, and Communication – 1 %. One to eight courses from each department were randomly selected. The number of students in attendance in each class varied from 7 to 50. A total of 24 courses were sampled. Each course was instructed by a different professor. The faculty members of the selected courses were informed of the general purpose of the study, namely

assessing students' well-being constructs. All of them have fully cooperated.

Instrumentation

The College Adjustment Test (CAT) This study used 15 items from the original survey (Pennebaker et al. 1990). Participants were asked to tap the degree to which they have experienced a variety of thoughts and feelings about being in college. Items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always* for all the items. The structural validity of the scale is shown in Fig. 2. The first factor (maladjustment) taps general negative affect about coming to college (e.g., 'Within the last months, to what degree have you: Worried about how you will perform academically; worried about the way you look; felt anxious or nervous') (9-item Cronbach's alpha equals to .87). The second factor (adjustment) refers to positive affect or optimism (e.g., 'Within the last months, to what degree have you: Felt optimistic about your future in college') (6-item Cronbach's alpha equals to .87). Each of the factors showed a very high internal consistency. A discriminate-related validity has been shown by the significant negative connection result found between the sub-scales ($r = -.162$, $p < .01$).

The Perceived Faculty Incivility Scale (PFIS) This scale was *designed* by (Alt and Itzkovich 2015) to measure the frequency of FI occurrences. The scale includes two FI constructs: Factor I contains 13 items representing *active incivility,* for example "The teacher yells at you as a response to misunderstanding*"* (Cronbach's alpha equals to .90). Factor II contains 8 items pertaining to *passive incivility*, for example "The teacher ignores students' questions during lectures" (Cronbach's alpha equals to .73). Each item was given a Likert-type score ranging from 1 = *almost never* to 5 = *nearly always*.

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to assess construct validity of the scale. Three fit indices were computed to evaluate the fit of the presumed dimensional structure: The Comparative Fit Index (*CFI* should be > .90), the Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA* should be < .08), and $\chi^2_{[df]}$ ($p > .05$) (Bentler 2006). Results indicated an acceptable model fit to the data (see the below findings for the structural model). Fig. 2 (Model 2) includes the measurement model (CFA solution) with standardized parameter estimates. The scale items were originally generated in Hebrew and were translated into English, and back-translated by professional editors, for the purpose of this paper.

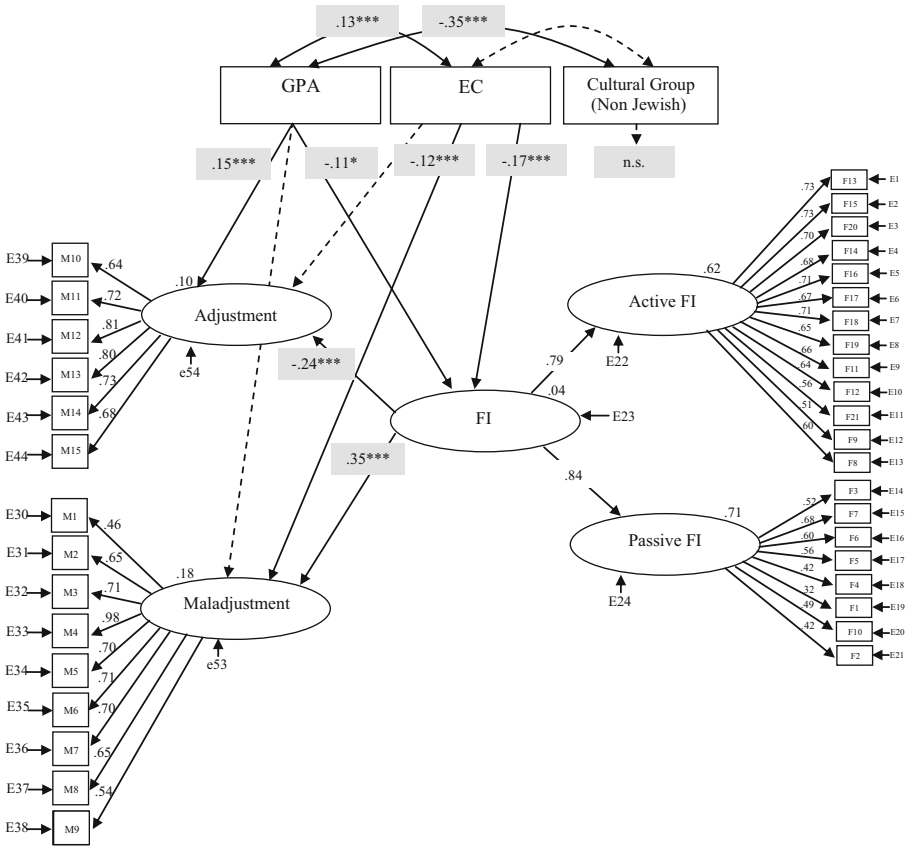

Fig. 2 The structural model, with standardized parameter estimates ($n = 744$). Note: $^*p < .05$ $^{**}p < .01$ $^{***}p < .001$. Non-significant coefficients are shown as fractured lines

Student Characteristics Data were gathered using a questionnaire aimed at assessing the student's cultural group, gender, age, socioeconomic-status (SES), year of study, and current education achievements. Students' SES was assessed by the father's educational attainment (FEA) and the mother's educational attainment (MEA), both defined on a six-level scale: 0 = *lack of education*, 1 = *elementary school*, 2 = *high school*, 3 = *BA degree*, 4 = *MA degree*, 5 = *doctoral degree*. Another SES factor was the participants' report on their economic condition (EC), defined on a six-level scale, from 1 = *extremely difficult* to 6 = *comfortable, no financial worries*. Finally, students' current education achievements were measured by their self-reported grade point average (GPA).

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered by research assistants to the participants in the classroom in which they studied without the instructor being present. The purpose of the study was explained as examining students' perception of their teachers' behavior. Prior to obtaining participants' consent, it was specified that the questionnaire was anonymous and that no pressure would be applied should they choose to return the questionnaire unfilled or incomplete. The *PFIS* was counterbalanced for protection against order effects. Background items were given last. Debriefing information was sent to the participants on the completion of the study via the academic institution's Web site and face-to-face presentations. Finally, participants were assured that no specific identifying information about the courses would be processed.

Findings

A paired-samples *t*-test was used to determine which of the FI dimensions (active vs. passive) is more prevalent in the classroom. A significant result was indicated between the subfactors $t\ (743) = 20.58$, $p < .001$. A relatively higher mean result was indicated for Passive FI ($M = 1.95$, $SD = 0.56$) compared with Active FI ($M = 1.55$, $SD = 0.57$). Cohen's *d* (effect size) was used to estimate the possible differences between features. Cohen's *d* indicates the standardized difference between two means and expresses this difference in standard deviation units. To calculate Cohen's *d,* the mean difference was divided by the standard deviation. Guidelines for the interpretation of the *d* index generally take $d = 0.2$ as a small effect, $d = 0.5$ as a moderate effect and $d = 0.8$ as a large effect (Cohen 1988; Kotrlik and Williams 2003). The above paired-samples *t*-test result was accompanied by a large effect size ($d = 0.75$).

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was employed to test the research hypothesis (*H1*), according to which - FI is expected to be negatively linked to adjustment, and positively connected to maladjustment to college life. Data used for the SEM were analyzed with the maximum likelihood method. Three fit indices were computed in order to evaluate the model fit: $\chi^2(df)$ ($p > .05$), *CFI* (>0.9), and *RMSEA* (< .08).

The structural model (Fig. 2) refers to the combined measurement and path models. The measurement model includes the following factors: The faculty incivility (FI) general latent factor accompanied by two sub-factors: *Active incivility* latent variable with 13 observed variables, and *passive incivility* latent variable with eight observed variables.

The path model was constructed as follows: Paths were specified between the latent factors and three student characteristic variables: GPA, EC, and Cultural group (*Jewish students* = 1, *Non-Jewish students* = 2). The latter dummy variable was created due to insignificant differences between the non-Jewish groups (Muslim, Christian, and Druze) on the dependent variables. The three student characteristic variables were entered into the analysis based on three regression analyzes, in which the general FI, adjustment, and maladjustment factors were separately entered as dependent variables, and all the following student characteristic variables were entered into the analyzes as independent variables: The student's cultural group, gender, age, year of study, current education achievements, FEA MEA, EC, and GPA. The goodness of fit of the data to the model yielded sufficient fit results ($\chi^2 = 2176.90_{[df = 688]}$, $p = .000$; *CFI* = .91; *RMSEA* = .05).

The results are summarized in Table 1. As can be learned from Table 1, a positive (low) significant coefficient was found between the FI and maladjustment factors ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$) and a negative (low) significant coefficient was indicated between the FI and adjustment variables ($\beta = -.24$, $p < .001$). These results support the research hypothesis (*H1*).

Regarding the student characteristic variables, a positive (low) connection was indicated between GPA and adjustment ($\beta = .15$, $p < .001$). A negative low connection was found between GPA and FI ($\beta = -.11$, $p < .05$). The EC variable was negatively related to the maladjustment ($\beta = -.12$, $p < .001$) and FI ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .001$) variables. Lastly, a positive (low) significant coefficient was indicated between the GPA and EC variables ($\beta = .13$, $p < .001$); and a negative (low) significant

Table 1 Summary of the structural model coefficient results ($n = 744$). Note: non-significant coefficients are indicated as n.s

	GPA	EC	Cultural Group (Non Jewish)	FI
Maladjustment	n.s.	-.12***	n.s.	.35***
Adjustment	.15***	n.s.	n.s.	-.24***
FI	-.11*	-.17***	n.s.	-
EC	.13***	–	n.s.	n.s.
Cultural Group (Non Jewish)	-.35***	n.s.	–	n.s.

*$p < .05$ **$p < .01$ ***$p < .001$

coefficient was indicated between the GPA variable and the Cultural group of non-Jewish students ($\beta = -.35$, $p < .001$).

The student characteristic variables together explained 3 %–4 % of the FI, adjustment and maladjustment factor variances. The FI factor explained 14 % of the maladjustment variance and 7 % of the adjustment variance.

An additional SEM analysis was used to measure the connections between the maladjustment factor and each of the FI factors (active/passive). According to the results, the maladjustment factor was merely linked to the passive incivility construct ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$) ($\chi^2 = 1498.265_{[df = 400]}$, $p = .000$; $CFI = .91$; $RMSEA = .06$).

Discussion

The current study was aimed at measuring the connections between FI features and adjustment to college. The impact of two FI dimensions (passive and active) was assessed, based on previous theoretical classifications (Berger 2000; Knepp 2012).

It was hypothesized that FI will be found negatively linked to adjustment, and positively connected to maladjustment to college life. The path model results have corroborated the research hypothesis - those who reported higher levels of uncivil encounters in the classroom have also reported an increase in negative emotional adjustment to college life; whereas decreased levels of FI incivility encounters were associated with an increased adjustment to college. An additional path analysis result has associated maladjustment with passive FI only. These findings seem to be consistent with previous research which linked academic incivility to negative emotional and well-being outcomes (Altmiller 2012; Bjorklund and Rehling 2010). The results also elaborate on previous work by placing an emphasis on the impact of specific FI constructs compared with the general one-dimensional incivility factor used in past studies, such as the Incivility in Nursing Education (INE) survey (Clark 2008).

Explanations for these results should be discussed in conjunction with this study's t-test results indicating higher levels of passive FI in the classrooms compared with active FI. Taken together, these findings illustrate the robust impact of passive incivility, which mainly includes occurrences in which the lecturers are not available for students and ignore their difficulties, on students' emotional well-being. Braxton et al. (2011) link passive incivility of faculty to the pressure placed on them to rapidly publish academic work to sustain their career. The authors maintain that the culture and structure of higher education would continue to tolerate and absorb such inappropriate behavior, unless teaching is regarded as more important than research. Differently said, unless the scales are tipped toward teaching, incidents of classroom incivility would be expected and infractions stood a chance of being overlooked. Another plausible explanation could be that passive FI behaviors are not viewed by academics as warranting severe sanctions compared with active occurrences of incivility as suggested by Braxton et al. (2011). Their study showed that academics believe that admonitory behaviors should be avoided but not severely sanctioned, such as advisement negligence and inconvenience avoidance.

Another interesting path has associated high levels of GPA with adjustment to college. This path result strengthens previous findings concerning the impact of prior achievement on adjustment. For, example, several studies have shown that high SAT and ACT (admissions tests) scores, as well as high-school achievements, can predict academic adjustment (Coyle and Pillow 2008; Hezlett et al. 2001). Our research elaborates on these findings by showing that current academic outcomes, measured by students' GPA, might also have an impact on the adjustment process.

Moreover, an inverse relation was indicated between GPA and FI perceptions. This can be explained by Rousseau's (1989, 1995) well-established model of psychological contract violation. Psychological contract is defined as a subjective perception of entitlements and obligations that are based on perceived promises at the workplace (Morrison and Robinson 1997). Contract violation develops when the employee feels that one or more of his perceived obligations has not been fulfilled. In a similar route, students develop their own expectations regarding their entitlements and obligations once they entered college (Koskina 2013; Nicholson, Putwain, Connors, and Hornby-Atkinson 2011; Spies et al. 2010). Thus, in the academic arena, grades can be considered as part of these expectations in the same manner as performance appraisal in workplaces. Drawing on Rousseau's model, once the contract is violated, due to, for example, a low GPA, the student might start monitoring his/her environment in order to seek for discrepancies. Such active monitoring might affect the student's future perceived violation. Thus, it is expected that those who feel that their entitlement was damaged (i.e., those with low GPA), will report on higher levels of faculty incivility mainly due to their growing sensitivity toward their entitlements once violated. This notion is strengthened by recent studies indicating that social attributes (i.e., interpersonal relationships) are mandatory elements of the psychological contract in workplaces (Chen 2010) as well as in the academic setting (Koskina 2013).

Another plausible explanation could be that those with lower grades are chosen by the lecturer as preferable victims due to their weakness. This explanation is based on the victimologic approach - according to which, individual characteristics and behaviors might affect the likelihood that a person will become a victim of a social interaction (Amir 1967; Aquino and Thau 2009; Curtis 1974; Drapkin and Viano 1974; Henle and Gross 2014; Olweus 1978). One inference from this theory could be that students with lower

grades are less participative in class and more involved in activities which are not related to the lecture (i.e. talk with friends). In that case, their behavior might irritate the lecturer which in turn retaliates in an uncivil manner. Given the positive correlation found between GPA and economic condition, the connections between socio-economic conditions, cognitive and emotional outcomes, and perceptions of incivility in the classroom might be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Lastly, to date, adjustment to college was tested among first-year college students. In our study, we did not find evidence for seniority correlates of adjustment. This study provides initial evidence that grades (which are gained during the entire learning period), rather than the year of study, have some impact on students' adjustment to college. These findings may imply that veteran students might be relevant for future research on adjustment to college.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present work features limitations and further directions for future research that warrant mentioning. First, it should be noted that the cross-sectional nature of the data can prevent definitive statements about causality. Indeed, some relationships in the model are likely reciprocal. For example, the analysis implies that FI could lead some to academic maladjustment, however, Drawing on information processing theories, personal perceptual processes are seen as key features of the processing of environmental stimuli (e.g., Alt 2014a, b; Warr and Knapper 1968). Through the lens of these theories, it is equally plausible that those who experience emotional maladjustment might become more aware and sensitive to encounters related to faculty incivility.

Second, the model tested here should be expanded in future research by using additional variables that could be related to academic adjustment, such as self-esteem, locus of control, and self-efficacy. These likely impact the manner in which students deal with problems and perceive their new environment and the novel situations they may encounter, thus have been widely proposed as influences on adjustment to college (Petersen, Louw, and Dumont 2009).

Third, this study was conducted in a single country and was limited to regional colleges; therefore, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to students of other colleges. The current study also used self-report measures. Different approaches to survey measurement, as well as experimental and qualitative techniques, should be employed by future work.

Conclusions, Practical and Methodological Implications

The findings of the present study empirically demonstrate, for the first time, the valuable connection between uncivil encounters in the classroom and negative emotional adjustment to college life. More specifically, the contribution of passive FI experiences to maladjustment to college life is recognized. This study shows that faculty responses to students can escalate or ease their emotional well-being. Therefore, the question of how faculty-student relationships can be improved is of importance.

Among practical implications of this study's main results, arises the necessity to design strategies that deter incivility and foster civility. For example, a code of faculty ethics may be established, in which incivility toward others should be considered as a direct violation of academic ethics, and the faculty moral responsibility to deter such unethical behaviors should be recognized. In addition, students should be encouraged to report uncivil faculty behaviors (Lasiter, Marchiondo, and Marchiondo 2012). These initiatives can be accompanied by activities aimed at nurturing common moral values; in this process teachers should discuss with their students which moral values are important and how moral norms could be collectively constructed. Teachers should negotiate the meaning of civil codes in the context of collaborative environments. Although rarely takes place in academic settings (Alt 2014b; Kamir 2007; Lasiter et al. 2012), open discourses on expected academic behavior are suggested by researchers as an important socialization tool aimed at confronting unethical behaviors (Geddes 2011; McCabe and Pavela 2004). In keeping with the code of ethics, faculty should condemn any behavior that demonstrates bias against or disrespect for any individual. The mutual acknowledgment in these codes of ethics is considered vital to creating a positive learning environment that will allow students to admit mistakes without fear of being humiliated (Altmiller 2012).

Another implication may be related to teachers' education. Faculty should seek guidance from experienced faculty about proactively managing complex classroom environments. Given the multicultural nature of these environments, faculty should be familiar with teaching practices and differentiated instruction methods adapted to the students' goals and objectives (Alt 2014c). Using an adaptive instruction might strengthen students' ability to meet the demands of a specific educational assignment and develop the skills necessary to excel in complex situations, therefore, could positively impact their adjustment process. This instruction includes practices such as providing scaffolding during the learning process, while encouraging and guiding students to reflect on their own learning processes, ask questions, and foster a dialogic thinking rather than acting as a knowledge conduit (Järvelä, Hurme, and Järvenoja 2011). These practices include attentiveness, listening, and reflection. Indeed, not having students' questions answered, for example, can be identified as an uncivil act, as perceived by students, however, from an instructional point of view, such acts my reflect university teachers' insufficient teaching resources or training needed for coping with new academic challenges and needs. An interesting

avenue for future research should be the evaluation of the connection between updated instructional practices, based on the student-centered pedagogy, and perception of FI.

From a methodological point of view, the present study elaborates on previous work by offering an operational definition for the theoretical two-dimension construct of FI, to provide explanations for relationships observed between these variables and adaptation to university. Thus, while previous studies have failed demarcating specific elements of FI, which may contribute to students' well-being, this study empirically tested two theoretically based academic incivilities and measured their links to relevant adjustment variables. Because students' level of adjustment to college could impact several important educational outcomes, such as academic performance and college retention (Baker & Siryk 1989; Credé and Niehorster 2012), it is of importance to further investigate its links to academic incivility. In this respect, it is advisable to use more robust data regarding student's performance indicators.

This study lends credence to previous work by showing the robust role of academic incivility in explaining maladjustment to college life over and above individual factors. However, giving its limitations, more research on this topic needs to be undertaken to further understand the implications of FI for students' emotional well-being.

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