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Rudeness is not only a kids' problem: Incivility against preschool teachers and its impacts

Yariv Itzkovich[1] · Niva Dolev[2]

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Abstract
Preschool teachers experience incivility, a mild form of violence, directed at them from different sources. These incivility experiences impact their work, and indirectly children in their care. In particular, incivility may trigger emotional, perceptual and behavioral responses, namely revenge, job insecurity, and reduced emotional resources. The impacts of perceived incivility were examined among 210 preschool teachers by means of an online questionnaire and through short interviews with teachers and family members. Incivility was noted to be positively correlated with revenge and with job insecurity, as well as with Self-Emotion Awareness and Use of Emotions, two of four Emotional intelligence (EI) sub-factors. Job insecurity was further positively correlated with Regulation of Emotions (an EI sub-factor) and with revenge. Additionally, revenge was negatively correlated with all four EI sub-factors. Interviews helped illuminate and enrich the quantitative findings. The findings bring to the foreground incivility phenomena and their impacts in early education environments, as well as the need to design processes to help preschool teachers cope with different forms and manifestations of incivility, thus allowing teachers to provide children with the best care possible.

Keywords Incivility · Stress · Revenge · Emotional intelligence (EI) · Job insecurity

Introduction

Broadly, incivility can be regarded as disrespectful dyadic interactions (Paulin and Griffin 2016; Torkelson et al. 2016) which may take place in a variety of contexts, including education. Incivility has been noted to be harmful to individuals and organizations, and has emotional, cognitive and behavioral implications. In particular, Pearson and Porath (2009) noted that incivility raises stress levels, which, in turn, increase cognitive dysfunction and evoke simplistic thinking and irritability. These latter attributes are considered indicators of impaired emotional intelligence (EI), a highly important set of skills for teachers (Yate 1997). Furthermore, Pearson and Porath (2009) note that stressors such as incivility are likely to trigger fight-or-flight emotional reactions, that is, automatic reactions which do not involve higher emotional processes. In particular, fight reactions may promote retaliatory and/or deviant behaviors which are based on vindictiveness (Itzkovich and Heilbrunn 2016; Lim and Teo 2009), including revenge. Conversely, flight motivated behaviors are considered passive and may include withdrawal behaviors and feelings of insecurity.

Taken together, these emotional, perceptual and behavioral reactions to incivility may impact work performance among preschool teachers and in turn their students, and therefore are important to explore.

Several studies have highlighted the emotional dimension of teaching (Nias 1996; Harris 2007), including preschool teaching (Kremenitzer and Miller 2008), and have indicated that teachers' emotions impact upon their own well-being (Nias 1996), upon the quality of their work (Day et al. 2007; Perry and Ball 2007) and upon their students (Hargreaves 1998). In particular, emotions were noted to play a unique role in the classroom (Perry and Ball 2007); to affect social relationships (Palomera et al. 2008) as well as teaching and learning processes (Hargreaves 2001); and to impact success and achievements among students (Hargreaves 1998). More

✉ Yariv Itzkovich
Itzkovichyariv@gmail.com; Itzkovichyariv@mx.kinneret.ac.il

Niva Dolev
nivadolev@hotmail.com

[1] Department of Human Resource Management, Kinneret Academic College Sea of Galilee, Kinneret, Israel

[2] Department of Education and Community, Kinneret Academic College Sea of Galilee, Kinneret, Israel

specifically, the important role of preschool teachers in the cognitive and emotional development of students is increasingly recognized (Kremenitzer and Miller 2008). However, the ability of teachers to teach effectively relies to a significant extent on their emotional state, which is impacted, among other things, by their perception of support, safety of relations and the stability of their work environments, as well as on their EI resources, which in turn are dependent on their experiences during work hours (Day et al. 2007). Such experiences both include and are driven to a significant extent by incivility (Karim et al. 2015) and may lead to negative, reciprocal outcomes, including vindictive behaviors (Bibi and Karim 2013; Bunk and Magley 2013; Itzkovich and Heilbrunn 2016), and to a growing sense of job insecurity. While EI has been widely noted to buffer against stress (Matthews and Zeidner 2000; Slaski 2002; Ciarrochi et al. 2002; Weare and Gray 2003; Fariselli et al. 2008; Jennings and Greenberg 2009), the impact of negative experiences on EI levels has been much less explored. Of the few available studies, Matthews et al. (2004) highlighted the complexity of the links between EI and stress, noting that individuals with high emotional perception were more likely to be affected by stress, while those with high emotional regulation tended to receive more social support, two elements which made them less prone to stress and depression.

Given the important role preschool teachers play in the overall development of young children, and the role of emotions, attitudes and behaviors in their work, it is important to study the interrelations between external events (incivility) and internal: beliefs (attitudes), emotions and behaviors (Ellis 2014), a connection which has been overlooked in incivility research to date.

More specifically, variables were selected to reflect emotional resources required to deal with incivility and likely reactions to incivility. Emotional Intelligence (EI) was selected as it is directly linked with emotional resources that have been noted to play an important role in teaching. Revenge has been selected as it is a manifestation of neglect, one of the 4 EVLN reactions to incivility alongside tolerance (Loyalty), reacting (Voice) and leaving or intentions to leave (Exit), and the most destructive of them (Itzkovich and Alt 2016). In particular, revenge can be especially harmful in preschool settings. Conversely, job insecurity, the third variable, constitutes a flight reaction that can be triggered by incivility, can undermine teachers' confidence at work and can negatively impact children.

To date, emotional skills have rarely been studied in the framework of unfavorable, incivility-prone work conditions, and despite some indications regarding the interrelations between EI and incivility (Pearson and Porath 2009), empirical evidence for such interrelations has been scarce (Bibi and Karim 2013; Itzkovich and Dolev 2017; Karim et al. 2015). In particular, the impact of incivility on emotional resources has been hardly studied. Additionally, the relationships between incivility and perceptions of either job insecurity or vindictive behaviors have been overlooked. In particular, only one study (Itzkovich 2016a, b focused on the relationships between incivility and job insecurity, with only scant reference to the links between incivility and vindictive behaviors (Gallus et al. 2014), and with no reference to such links within the framework of preschools and preschool teachers.

A better understanding of these interrelations and impacts would greatly benefit preschool teachers, both personally and professionally, as well as the quality of preschool education in general.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Incivility

Andersson and Pearson (1999) defined incivility as "the exchange of seemingly inconsequential and inconsiderate words and/or deeds in the workplace in violation of conventional norms" (Pearson and Porath 2009, p.12). Such exchanges include interactions among individuals (Porath and Erez 2007), within teams (Paulin and Griffin 2016), in labor markets, or in other employment settings (Itzkovich and Heilbrunn 2016). For the most part, incivility concerns mild rude behaviors (Andersson and Pearson 1999; Paulin and Griffin 2016), and has been referred to as a mild form of violence (Osler and Starkey 2005), on the lower end of the violence continuum (with bullying ranking 3–4 on a 1–10 continuum, and with severe, blatant and overt types of physical violence placed at the high end of the continuum (Namie 2004; Felblinger 2008; Johnson-Bailey 2015). It should be noted that according to Namie (2004) severe violence typically results from an escalation of milder forms of violence, such as resentment (namely incivility).

Incivility tends to trickle down in the organizational hierarchy (Pearson and Porath 2009; Porath and Pearson 2013; Torkelson et al. 2016), thus illustrating the inherent role of power in the dyadic equation of uncivil interactions (Pearson and Porath 2009). However, incivility may also be perpetrated by colleagues, patients' families (Reio and Reio 2011; Riskin et al. 2017), customers and even strangers (Han et al. 2016; Kern and Grandey 2009).

Implications of Incivility Growing evidence points to links between incivility and negative emotions, including stress (Cortina and Magley 2009; Roberts et al. 2011; Schilpzand et al. 2016).

While some studies suggest stress to be an antecedent to workplace incivility (Taylor and Kluemper 2012), others consider it an outcome (Pearson and Porath 2009; Schilpzand

et al. 2016). In particular, Pearson and Porath (2009) noted that incivility raises stress levels, while emotional intelligence has been suggested to buffer against stress and to provide stress coping mechanisms (Zeidner et al. 2012b). It should be noted that in the context of the education system, stress has been seen to negatively impact teachers and their work, and thus their students (Slaski and Cartwright 2002; Brackett and Katulak 2006; Drew 2006; Nelson 2006; Palomera et al. 2008; Jennings and Greenberg 2009).

In other studies, behaviors related to incivility, which may include withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism (Schilpzand et al. 2016); turnover intentions (Wilson and Holmvall 2013); and actual turnover (Porath and Pearson 2012; Schilpzand et al. 2016), and which have also been viewed as outcomes of job insecurity (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010; Sverke and Hellgren 2001), have been linked with negative impacts on the education system.

Finally, incivility has been suggested as a precursor to higher intensity antisocial behaviors such as aggression and bullying (Farrell et al. 2016), and thus has further potential for impacting teachers, young students and education in general.

However, despite these suggested links, and despite some indications regarding the interrelations between incivility and EI and the potential impacts on education practice and outcomes (Pearson and Porath 2009), empirical evidence for such interrelations remains scarce (Karim et al. 2015).

Job Insecurity

One of the potential impacts of incivility on workers is a growing sense of job insecurity. Job insecurity was defined by Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984, p.438) as "powerlessness to maintain desired continuity in a threatened job situation". It is centered on one's current employment, on perceptions of potential threats to one's professional position and on individual expectations about the ability to maintain it (Vander Elst et al. 2014). Thus, it is a subjective experience. Furthermore, while the above definition suggests a one-dimensional construct concerned merely with either keeping or losing one's job, several scholars have noted job insecurity to be a more complex psychological state and have highlighted its multi-faceted nature (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010; Rosenblatt and Ruvio 1996). In particular, some researchers suggested that job insecurity could be the outcome of any possible perceived loss of a variety of desired job features (O'Neill and Sevastos 2013). Such losses may include the loss of civility when incivility is on the rise (Itzkovich and Heilbrunn 2016) in diverse work settings, including in teaching environments (Richter et al. 2015; Rosenblatt and Ruvio 1996). In line with the above-described multidimensional approach, the loss of civility, a desired work feature (Itzkovich 2016a, b), could signify a loss of the interpersonal dimension of work, and could therefore trigger perceptions of job insecurity (Itzkovich 2016a, b). Accordingly, our first hypothesis states as follows:

> H1: Incivility among preschool teachers is positively correlated with job insecurity.

Revenge

Recent findings suggest that experiences of workplace incivility could lead to affect-driven negative behaviors, including deviant retaliatory behaviors (Zeidner et al. 2012a).

One such behavior, revenge, has been defined by Aquino et al. (2006) as "an effort by the victim … to inflict damage, injury, discomfort, or punishment on the party judged responsible for causing the harm" (p. 654).

Similarly, revenge has been classified as Neglect, one of four main reactions to incivility, alongside tolerance (Loyalty), reacting (Voice) and leaving or intentions to leave (Exit), which together constitute the EVLN model (Rousseau 1995).

While earlier on revenge was identified as a retaliatory behavior that enables coping with stressful situations such as job insecurity (Sverke and Hellgren 2001), or with the violation of psychological contracts (Rousseau 1995) which are based, in part, on relations and safety within them, more recently it has been proven to be an ineffective coping strategy (Copeland-Linder et al. 2011).

Previous studies found that victims of incivility are inclined to react negatively, and in particular by retaliation, to instances of incivility in business settings (Andersson and Pearson 1999; Itzkovich and Heilbrunn 2016). Accordingly, the second research hypothesis postulated that:

> H2: Incivility among preschool teachers is positively correlated with revenge.

Additionally, as both revenge and job insecurity were noted to give rise to negative emotions (De Oliveira Medeiros and Alcapadipani 2016), and as job insecurity has been linked to negative coping strategies (Alcapadipani 2016; Vander Elst et al. 2016), including vindictive behaviors such as revenge in a variety of professions (Van den Broeck et al. 2014), the third research hypothesis postulated that:

> H3: Revenge among preschool teachers is positively correlated with job insecurity.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Mayer and Salovey (1997), pioneers of EI research, suggested that EI involves the ability to identify and express emotions, to

understand emotions and emotional knowledge in self and others, to assimilate emotions in thoughts, and to regulate both positive and negative emotions in self and others. Using a wider framework, Bar-On (1997) defined EI as "a cross-section of interrelated emotional and social competencies, skills and facilitators that determine how effectively we understand and express ourselves, understand others and relate to them, and cope with daily demands" (p. 3). In particular, Bar-On (2006) included stress-tolerance among the 15 competencies and skills of his EI model, thus highlighting its contribution to coping.

Experiences of incivility have been recognized to be emotional in nature, to comprise a main source of stress and to have severe negative impacts on individuals (Ciarrochi et al. 2002; Zeidner et al. 2012b). EI, on the other hand, has been noted to buffer against stress (Slaski and Cartwright 2003) and stress-coping abilities have been linked to specific EI skills such as self-awareness, effective regulation of emotions, empathy and effective use of relationships for support in various professions, including among teachers (Ciarrochi et al. 2002; Weare and Gray 2003). In particular, such EI skills have been linked to effective teaching (Haskett 2003; Drew 2006) and to the ability to form positive relations with students and to create a positive class climate (Perry and Ball 2008). Furthermore, it has been noted that successful early childhood educators rely on several important skills within the EI range (Kremenitzer and Miller 2008).

However, while the above studies suggest the importance of EI to preschool teachers and to coping with occupational stress, several recent studies have noted a direct impact of incivility on the ability to use these skills (Pearson and Porath 2009). These findings have been reinforced by Thompson (2010) who posited that stress has an enormous impact on cognitive and emotional resources and that it reduces the ability to use EI and to function effectively. Thompson (2010) further suggested that it is also possible that EI is actually constrained and reduced by high stress levels. Thus, as stress levels increase, the ability to effectively use EI may actually decrease. Such a link implies that experiences of incivility among preschool teachers could deplete EI resources. In line with these findings and with the paucity of research regarding the impact of stress (in this case incivility) on EI (in contrast with the protective role of EI in stressful situations which has been widely studied), our fourth research hypothesis postulated that:

> H4: Incivility among preschool teachers is negatively correlated with EI.

Revenge, noted earlier to be a potential retaliatory response to incivility, has been noted to trigger a variety of poor mental health outcomes (Kochenderfer-Ladd 2004), including stress (Yoshimura 2007), and to be an ineffective reaction to incivility (Andersson and Pearson 1999). On the other hand, and as noted above, the ability to use EI skills may be reduced by stress (Thompson 2010), and more generally by negative emotionality (Pearson and Porath 2009). Thus, it can be further postulated that:

> H5: Revenge among preschool teachers is negatively correlated with EI.

Finally. job-related stress, including stress created by job insecurity, is recognized to be an energy-consuming and negative emotional experience (Zeidner et al. 2012b). Such experiences usually follow stimuli which are consciously or unconsciously interpreted as threats, and in turn lead to responses aimed at ending the initial, negative experiences (Boswell et al. 2014). In line with these observations, Jordan et al. (2002) argued that EI moderates employees' emotional reactions to job insecurity as well as their ability to cope with associated stress.

More specifically, it has been noted that coping behaviors which are focused on negative emotions in response to job insecurity may indicate an inability to manage emotions (Jordan et al. 2002), the latter recognized as a key facet of EI (Mayer and Salovey 1997). Drawing on the above, but in a reciprocal vein, we hypothesized that:

> H6: EI resources reduce perceptions of job insecurity among preschool teachers.

In order to test the above six research hypotheses, we proposed an integrated model, with a hypothetical set of relationships between the studied variables (Fig. 1). In particular, the proposed model comprises an inner model (referred to also as a structural model) and an outer model (referred to also as a measurement model). While the inner model describes relationships between latent variables, the outer model describes relationships between latent variables and their indicators.

Methods

The study used a mixed-method approach, with a dominant quantitative segment supported by personal interviews (the qualitative segment). Quantitative data was collected first,

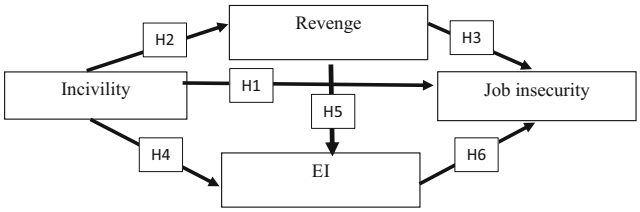

Fig. 1 The theoretical structure of the proposed framework

followed by qualitative data collection, in line with an explanatory sequential design (Creswell and Plano Clark 2017). This use of qualitative results to further explain and interpret findings from the quantitative phase, as suggested by Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), provided a deeper understanding of participants' experiences.

Participants

Participants included 210 female preschool teachers between the ages of 24 and 64, with an average age of 39.4 years. This gender bias was unavoidable as the vast majority of preschool teachers in Israel are females. All teachers were employed in early education centers located in the center of Israel, the most populated area in the country. Eighty seven percent (87%) of all participants held full time positions and 81.3% held permanent positions. The majority of the participants (97.4%) were employed by the Israeli Ministry of Education and the rest were contract workers. The average tenure for all participants was 14.45 years.

Additionally, for the qualitative part of the study, 10 preschool teachers who had experienced incivility, and 10 family members (6 husbands, 2 daughters and 2 mothers), associated each with one teacher-participant, were interviewed by phone. As noted in the following section, this sample was used to both better capture teachers' experiences and to overcome common-method bias.

Research Tools

Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale

EI was measured by means of the 16-item Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (Wong and Law 2002), a self-report measure based on the Salovey-Mayer EI framework (Salovey and Mayer 1990) which includes four EI dimensions (or sub-factors): Self-Emotion Appraisal [SEA]; Others' Emotion Appraisal [OEA]; Use of Emotions [UOE]; and Regulation of Emotions [ROE], each comprising four items.

Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement on the associated EI questionnaires, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). A sample statement was: '*I really understand what I feel*'. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients were: .93 for the SEA dimension, .88 for the OEA dimension, .87 for the UOE dimension and .92 for the ROE dimension.

Perceived Incivility Scale

Workplace incivility was measured by means of a dedicated 12-item 5-point Likert scale (Cortina et al. 2013). Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they had experienced uncivil behaviors during the previous year, such as: being interrupted, being targeted by angry outbursts, or being subjected to hostile stares from coworkers and supervisors or from parents of students. A sample item was: '*During the past year, were you ever in a situation in which any of your supervisors or co-workers yelled, shouted, or swore at you*?'. Answers ranged from 1 - *never* to 5 - *many times*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale was .92.

Revenge Scale

Revenge was measured by means of the Aquino et al. (2001) 5-point revenge Likert scale. This 5-item, 5-point scale had been designed to measure revenge behaviors. A sample item was: *'I tried to make something bad happen to them'*. Answers ranged from 1- *not at all accurate* to 5- *very accurate*. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .91.

Job Insecurity Scale

Job insecurity was measured by means of the Vander Elst et al. (2014) 4-item, 5-point Likert scale, with answers ranging from 1 - *strongly disagree* to 5 - *strongly agree*. Sample items were: '*Chances are that I will soon lose my job*' and '*I am sure that I can keep my job*'. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated to be .77.

Prior to assessing the relationships between the latent variables (comprising the inner, structural, model) we had to test the relationships between the latent variables and their indicators in order to verify that the outer, measurement model is reliable.

Tables 1 and 2 include the calculated values for the convergent validity, internal consistency and discriminant validity for the outer model and for each of the above scales (Hair et al. 2016). The data indicates that convergent validity, internal consistency and discriminant validity have all been achieved.

Common method bias (CMB) should be considered as well in a cross-sectional measurement method which was utilized in the current study. In order to verify that the data collected can be considered as free of common method bias, in the context of PLS-SEM, variance inflation factor (VIF) values of the inner model should be measured in order to test for collinearity between the model's constructs. It was noted that VIF values greater than 3.3 implies collinearity between the constructs which is an indication of CMB, while VIF values lower than the threshold of 3.3, indicates that the data can be considered free of CMB. Our results indicated VIF values lower than 3.3, thus it is safe to assume our data does not suffer of CMB (Kock 2015).

Table 1 Results summary for reflective outer models analysis for checking convergent validity

Latent variable	Indicators	Convergent validity			Internal consistency reliability		Discriminant validity
		Loadings	Indicator reliability (i.e., loading^2)	AVE	Composite reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	HTMT confidence interval does not include 1
		>.70	>.50	>.50	.60–.90	.60–.90	<.90
Incivility	Incivility1	.79	.62	.56	.93	.92	Yes
	Incivility2	.84	.70				
	Incivility3	.82	.67				
	Incivility4	.78	.60				
	Incivility5	.64	.40				
	Incivility6	.73	.53				
	Incivility7	.65	.42				
	Incivility8	.82	.67				
	Incivility9	.72	.51				
	Incivility10	.81	.65				
	Incivility11	.70	.49				
	Incivility12	.59	.34				
Revenge	Revenge1	.73	.53	.73	.93	.91	Yes
	Revenge2	.93	.86				
	Revenge3	.93	.86				
	Revenge4	.69	.47				
	Revenge5	.94	.88				
Job insecurity	Job insecurity1	.86	.73	.61	.85	.77	Yes
	Job insecurity2	.38	.14				
	Job insecurity3	.84	.70				
	Job insecurity4	.88	.77				
SEA	EI1	.92	.84	.84	.95	.93	Yes
	EI2	.96	.92				
	EI3	.92	.84				
	EI4	.85	.72				
OEA	EI5	.70	.49	.72	.91	.88	Yes
	EI6	.81	.65				
	EI7	.92	.84				
	EI8	.93	.86				
UOE	EI9	.81	.65	.72	.91	.87	Yes
	EI10	.79	.62				
	EI11	.91	.82				
	EI13	.87	.75				
ROE	EI12	.88	.77	.80	.94	.92	Yes
	EI14	.90	.81				
	EI15	.87	.75				
	EI16	.92	.84				

Methods and Procedure

In June 2016, a web-link to an online questionnaire was provided to all preschool teachers on the list of the Association of Preschool Teachers. Participants were assured that their anonymity would be maintained throughout the process.

There were 230 questionnaires filled out and submitted, 210 of which contained usable data. A 10 % response rate was calculated. Of the 210 participating teachers, 94 reported experiences of incivility.

Of the 210 participants, 37 provided additional contact details of adult family members who would agree to be interviewed and to provide additional perspectives and

Table 2 Descriptive statistics correlations and Fornell-Larcker criterion analysis for checking discriminant validity

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Incivility	2.58	1.03	(.74)						
2. SEA	4.52	0.73	.05	(.89)					
3. OEA	4.03	0.70	.01	.71**	(.85)				
4. UOE	4.30	0.76	.09	.67**	.51**	(.91)			
5. ROE	3.93	0.85	−.04	.60**	.50**	.62**	(.85)		
6. Job insecurity	2.51	0.92	.42**	−.05	.00	−.01	.04	(.78)	
7. Revenge	1.66	1.04	.25**	−.38**	−.29**	−.29**	−.30**	.30**	(.85)

$N = 210$. Fornell-Larcker Criterion for discriminant validity is in parentheses

**$p < .01$

insights into the incivility events. Thirty-two of 37 contact entries were usable.

Short semi-structured telephone interviews were held with 10 of the participant teachers and with 10 of the 32 contact persons who had been noted by the participants. Interviewees were randomly selected.

Common guidelines for open-ended interview questions, and the inclusion of several similar questions that focused on incivility experiences and on their impacts on teachers and their families, allowed flexibility with regard to the order and the time allocation for each question, and provided opportunity for discussions of emerging topics.

Such a mixed-methods approach within a quantitative framework has been noted to enrich data, to increase the depth and scope of inquiries (Brannen 2005; Seale 1999), to provide researchers with a degree of triangulation, and to overcome common-method bias (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). In particular, the latter was achieved by conducting interviews with individuals other than the teachers themselves. Furthermore, a mixed-methods approach is in line with Bar-On (1997) who recommended the use of a wide variety of methods for the study of EI.

Interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis approach, as described by Weber (1990), and following a clearly defined and methodical procedure. Each interview transcript was analyzed and coded using open coding (a method described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) to identify emerging themes), and cross-interview categories were then created, a key step according to Creswell (1998).

Results

Quantitative Results

SmartPLS 3.0 software, with PLS-SEM analysis, was used to analyze the results. The two common methods for quantitative analysis of structural equation modelling are PLS-SEM and CBS_SEM (Hair et al. 2016). In the present study, PLS-SEM was chosen over CB-SEM primarily due to sample size. While CB-SEM is used in larger samples, PLS-SEM can be applied to smaller samples, and thus is more appropriate for the relatively small sample size in the present study. Additionally, PLS-SEM is more focused on explaining variance in dependent variables and is well suited for exploring the unique contribution of the independent variables to the variance in the dependent variables (Hair et al. 2016), in line with the focus of our research. Finally, SmartPLS is primarily used for exploratory multivariate analysis, in line with the present study - an exploratory study set to examine the impacts of incivility on emotions (EI), attitudes (job insecurity) and behaviors (revenge), all of which have been overlooked in incivility research to date.

A structural (inner) model (Fig. 2) was designed to include the following factors: Incivility, a latent variable with twelve items; Emotional Intelligence, comprising four latent variables for each of the four sub-factors: Self-Emotion Appraisal [SEA], Others' Emotion Appraisal [OEA], Use of Emotions [UOE], and Regulation of Emotions [ROE], each with four indicators; Revenge, a latent variable with five items; and Job Insecurity, a latent variable with four items.

A path model was constructed as follows: Paths were specified between workplace incivility and between each of the four EI sub-factors. Additional paths were specified between incivility and revenge and between incivility and job insecurity. Finally, paths were specified between revenge and the four sub-factors of EI, between revenge and job insecurity and between the four sub-factors of EI and job insecurity.

Table 3 includes the various path coefficients and their levels of significance. The data indicates the existence of several significant paths: Incivility was positively correlated with two sub-factors of EI, namely SEA ($r = .17, p < .01$) and UOE ($r = .18, p < .01$) as well as with job insecurity ($r = .37, p < .01$) and revenge ($r = .26, p < .01$). Moreover, the ROE sub-factor of EI was positively correlated with job insecurity ($r = .17, p < .05$). Revenge, however, while also positively correlated with job insecurity ($r = .22, p < .01$), was found to be negatively correlated with all four EI sub-factors: ROE ($r = -.32, p < .01$); OEA ($r = -.27, p < .01$); SEA ($r = -.43, p < .01$); and UOE ($r = -.34, p < .01$).

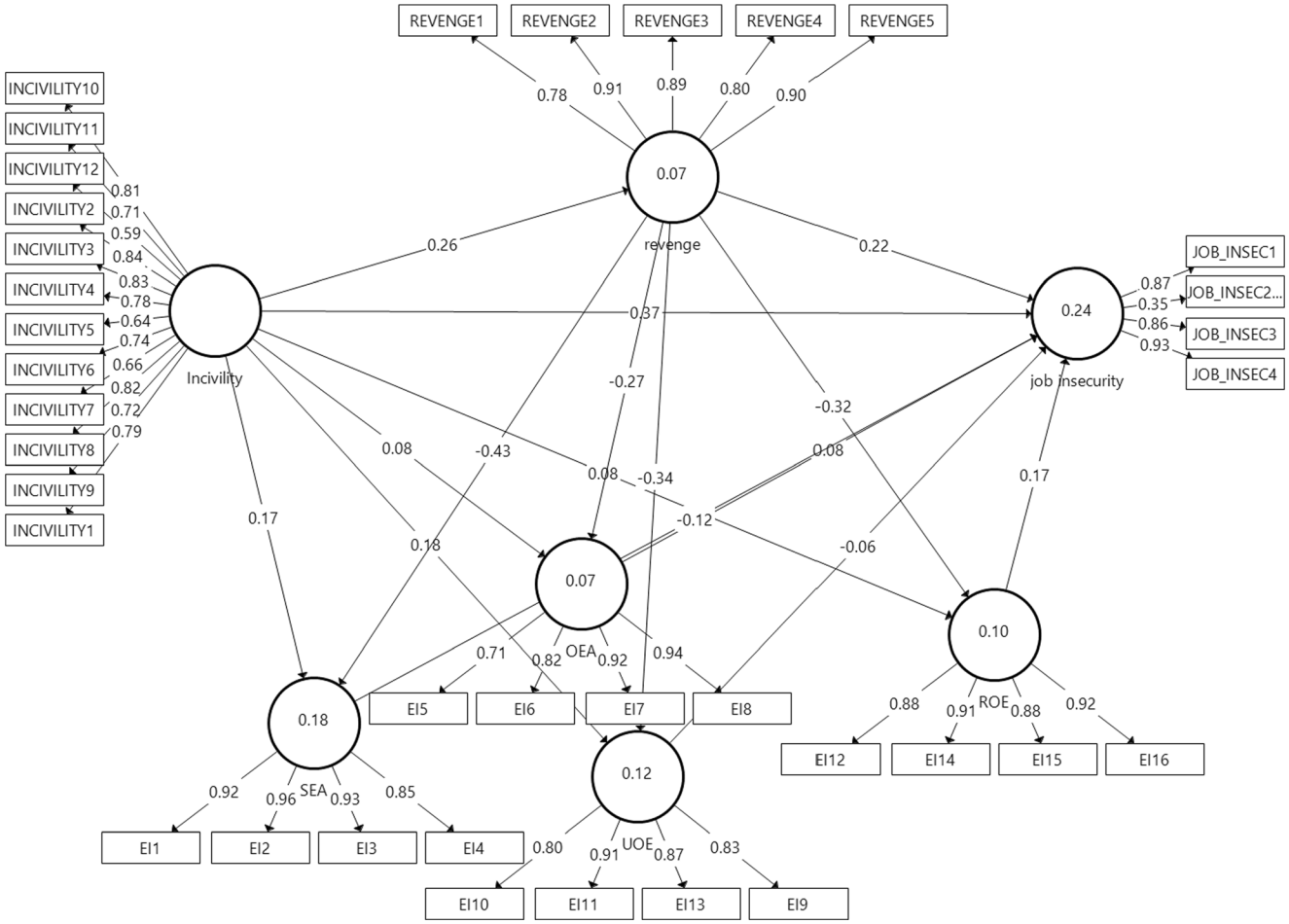

Fig. 2 Analysis results of the complete model

Table 3 Significance testing results of the total effects

Complete model	Path Coefficient	*T* values	*P* Values	95% confidence intervals	f^2	Significance
Incivility - > ROE	0.08	1.02	0.31	[−0.07,0.22]	–	No
Incivility - > OEA	0.08	0.92	0.36	[−0.13,0.22]	–	No
Incivility - > SEA	0.17	2.49	0.01	[0.02,0.29]	0.03	Yes
Incivility - > UOE	0.18	2.50	0.01	[0.02,0.30]	0.03	Yes
Incivility - > job insecurity	0.37	5.69	0.00	[0.24,0.49]	0.16	Yes
Incivility - > revenge	0.26	3.12	0.00	[0.09,0.42]	0.07	Yes
ME - > job insecurity	0.17	2.08	0.04	[0.00,0.33]	0.02	Yes
OEA - > job insecurity	0.08	0.85	0.40	[−0.11,0.27]	–	No
SEA - > job insecurity	−0.12	1.11	0.27	[−0.31,0.09]	–	No
UE - > job insecurity	−0.06	0.65	0.52	[−0.23,0.10]	–	No
revenge - > ROE	−0.32	3.48	0.00	[−0.47,-0.11]	0.1	Yes
revenge - > OEA	−0.27	2.39	0.02	[−0.44,0.03]	0.07	Yes
revenge - > SEA	−0.43	4.02	0.00	[−0.60,0.18]	0.21	Yes
revenge - > UOE	−0.34	2.98	0.00	[−0.52,-0.07]	0.12	Yes
revenge - > job insecurity	0.22	3.00	0.00	[0.07,0.36]	0.04	Yes

*Bootstrap confidence intervals were referred for testing significance

Data for the explained variance of the endogenous latent variables is depicted in Fig. 2.

In Fig. 2, and similar to Fig. 1, R^2 values for the data are mostly low-moderate, with the explained variance for job insecurity calculated to be 24%, the explained variance for revenge at 7%, and the explained variance for the four EI sub-factors ranging between 7% to18%.

In order to evaluate the impacts of each of the exogenous constructs upon the endogenous ones (the effect size), f^2 values were calculated for each path. The results (Table 3) indicate low effect size for most of the significant paths. A moderate effect size was noted for two paths only: The incivility- > job insecurity path ($f^2 = .16$) and the revenge - > SEA path ($f^2 = .21$).

Finally, Q^2 values were calculated in order to test the predictive relevance of the complete model with regard to each endogenous construct separately. The results indicate that all endogenous variables had acceptable (low) predictive power.

Additionally, the data suggests the presence of some mediation effects.

Zhao et al. (2010) challenged former guidelines for testing mediation (Baron and Kenny 1986), concluding that the existence of an indirect effect of an independent variable (IV) on a dependent variable (DV) via a moderator is sufficient to establish mediation. Once such an indirect effect is established, the existence of a direct link between the IV and the DV would determine whether mediation is full or partial (Hair et al. 2016; Zhao et al. 2010). In the present case, as no significant direct links between incivility and either ROE)Regulation of Emotions) or OEA (Others' Emotion Appraisal) (i.e. IV and DV respectively) were noted, and as the indirect links between incivility and these sub-factors, via revenge, were significant, the Zhao et al. (2010) guidelines allow us to conclude that revenge fully mediated the relationships between incivility and both the ROE and OEA sub-factors of EI. Similarly, and in accordance with the data in Table 4, it can be stated that the relationships between incivility and both the SEA and UOE sub-factors were only partially mediated by revenge.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative findings were gleaned from interviews with participant-teachers, who had experienced incivility first hand, and with selected members of their families. These interviews allowed for a more thorough examination of the studied phenomena and provided additional insights into incivility experiences. The main themes that emerged from analysis of the interviews included sources of incivility, manifestations of incivility, and impacts of incivility on teachers, both on their professional and personal lives.

Sources of Incivility Asked to identify the main source of incivility towards participant-teachers, both teachers and family members pointed to one or more of the following three groups: Teacher aides, parents of students, and supervisors at the Ministry of Education. They described instances in which teacher aides had refused to cooperate with teachers, had criticized them or had turned parents of students against the teachers, as well as cases where parents had blamed teachers for various failings, shouted at them, posted negative comments against them on social media, or filed complaints against them with supervisors at the Ministry of Education. Ministry supervisors, in turn, were cited either as a primary source of incivility (e.g. for being disrespectful towards teachers), or else as secondary perpetrators (e.g. for withholding expected support from teachers and thus aggravating incivility experiences).

Impacts of Incivility All interviewees noted that experiences of incivility took a great toll on the participant-teachers, elicited emotions such as stress, sadness, distress, worry, anger and a sense of injustice, and depleted their emotional resources. One participant-teacher noted: "*The whole thing [incivility experience] hurt me and exhausted me, I was drained, all out of energy, even depressed…*". While describing instances of incivility experienced by her mother, one interviewee noted: "*She took it very hard. Mom is like that, she wants to be OK with everyone… It really hurt her, she wasn't used to this.*" (a daughter). Family members, as well as several teachers, typically described a process that combined dwelling on emotions, constant reflection and being preoccupied with 'what went wrong' and 'what to do'. They noted that this process was energy draining and that it added to the initial stress they had endured (i.e. stress experienced immediately after experiencing incivility): "*She dwelled on it a lot, kept thinking and talking about it, why did it happen, what could she have done differently, what should she do now. She was constantly preoccupied with it.*" *(a mother).*

All interviewees noted that incivility experiences affected the homes and families of incivility-targets and dominated family discussions. Teachers targeted by incivility were noted to take home with them their feelings of physical and mental exhaustion. In some cases, these feelings elicited negative reactions at home, such as anger, impatience, or lack of attention towards family members: "*…I would come home, and I would head straight to bed, I couldn't pay attention to my children, I would often get angry at my husband… At one point he even said that he was considering a divorce*" (a participant teacher).

Incivility experiences were further noted to take up family-time, as teachers invested their free time at home in efforts to solve incivility-related work issues and required support from family members to face related challenges: "*She spoke about it a lot… It was the major topic of discussion at home… the rest of the time she was sad and withdrawn, [she was] exhausted*" *(a daughter);* "*A lot of my time at home was*

Table 4 Significance analysis of the direct and indirect effects

	Direct effect	95% confidence interval of the direct effect	*t* value	Significance ($p < 0.05$)	Indirect effect	95% confidence interval of the indirect effect	*t* value	Significance ($p < 0.05$)
Incivility-ROE	.07	[−0.076,0.222]	1.054	No	−0.083	[−0.146, −0.026]	2.70	Yes
Incivility- OEA	.08	[−0.125,0.226]	0.950	No	−0.070	[−0.131,0.004]	2.11	Yes
Incivility- SEA	.16	[0.029,0.291]	2.560	Yes	−0.11	[−0.182, −0.042]	3.084	Yes
Incivility- UOE	.17	[0.036,0.305]	2.589	Yes	−0.08	[−0.163, −0.02]	2.39	Yes

*Bootstrap confidence intervals were referred for testing significance

devoted to it, speaking to a supervisor or to the education coordinator, having long talks with colleagues, with my husband…" (a participant teacher). At times, active measures taken by participants in response to incivility experiences were noted, such as talking to ministry supervisors, directly addressing perpetrators (teacher aides or parents of students) in order to solve underlying issues, or asking for help from third party officials, such as the Israeli Teachers Association or from staff at the Department of Education in the relevant municipality. Conversely, interviewees also noted clear signs of helplessness, worry, stress, reduced self-confidence and increased insecurity*: "I lost my confidence as a teacher, I came to believe that what my aid said about me was probably true, that I wasn't a good teacher, that parents didn't appreciate me, and that I couldn't succeed without her (the aid). It took me a long time to recover" (a participant teacher)*; "*…She felt misunderstood, powerless and unappreciated" (a daughter).*

Loss of confidence was sometimes accompanied by feelings of Job insecurity, mostly manifested in fears of being transferred to a different school, of being demoted, or of being laid off: "*She was worried that it (i.e. the accusations that formed part of the incivility experience) would go into her personal file and that her supervisor would ask her to give up her class" (a mother).* Both of these two potential consequences, being singled out as a bad teacher or being transferred or fired, highlight an area of specific concern for some of the participants: –, that is the possible financial consequences of incivility at the workplace. Other interviewees referred to job insecurity in terms of potential loss of either professional authority, reputation and/or professional autonomy: "*It's a small place. When something happens at school, everyone knows about it and it's hard to carry on 'as usual' …" (a teacher).*

While participant-teachers noted that they tried to do their best at work and to not let incivility experiences impact the way they worked, interviews, mainly those with family members, revealed that the teachers had in fact been affected by stress and had experienced a sense of insecurity and lower confidence, which subsequently impacted their work. One teacher noted that she had limited the time allocated for children's arts and crafts activities to a minimum, so as not to upset her teaching aid: "*I know I accomplished much less during that year, working with that specific aid. I limited the amount of daily activities with the children, I avoided activities that involved even the slightest amount of mess, although children love and need this kind of activities. And it wasn't only out of fear, I had much less energy to plan things and much less confidence in carrying out my plans" (a teacher).*

Another teacher cancelled a social-emotional learning program for her students in response to some parents' aggressive reactions. Yet another teacher reduced the number of planned activities in the classroom, fearing negative reactions from the Education Ministry supervisor.

None of the interviewees noted any revenge inclinations or acts of revenge that were committed by teachers against students in response to incidents of incivility: "*Even when things were really bad with the parents, when they accused me of terrible things, it never impacted the way I treated the children, including those parents' kids. I realized it wasn't t their (the children's) fault" (a teacher).* Furthermore, the enduring commitment and devotion exhibited by the participant-teachers towards their students, even in the midst of incivility experiences, were noted with admiration by their families: "*Mom is the most committed person I know, so I can say, without hesitation, that it didn't affect her work" (a daughter);* "*It had no impact at all on her work with the kids. I was surprised… Not even towards the child whose mother had offended her" (a husband).*

At the same time, family members did refer to more nuanced forms of revenge which had been directed by some of the teachers towards their workplace, such as investing less energy and time at work and/or not attempting to exceed expectations. In fact, such forms of revenge were often encouraged by family members: "*I told her: [You could] leave early sometimes, the system doesn't reward you, nothing would happen if you left work a bit earlier…* " *(a husband);* "*I kept telling her: They don't deserve you, [They don't deserve] your hard work and dedication, don't give them so much [of yourself]*" (a daughter). While typical testimonies from family members indicated that teachers were not inclined to act on such suggestions, several interviewees described teachers who had demonstrated low-energy levels at work, at times as a deliberate act of protest. In particular, references were made to two teachers who had perceived the education system to be

unjust and unsupportive and had considered leaving it altogether, but in the end refrained from doing so: "*She would never do it. Even though she had declared more than once that she would, she never did…*" *(a husband).* Leaving the education system was perceived by those teachers as an act of protest or revenge, since finding replacement teachers would have challenged the system and might have elicited negative reactions from parents.

Discussion

Teachers, and in particular preschool teachers, are exposed to a wide range of stressors with which they are forced to cope emotionally as well as behaviorally. Teachers' emotions impact upon their well-being, upon their professional performance (Nias 1996; Day et al. 2007), upon their students' learning and well-being, and upon the success of the entire school (Hargreaves 1998, 2001). It follows that stress-coping capabilities and reactions are expected to impact teachers' work and personal well-being (Richter et al. 2015). These considerations are gaining even more importance with the changes brought about by the twenty-first century and the accompanying changes in work relations and in work environments.

The current study examined the effects of incivility, a potential stressor, on preschool teachers, by considering various fight-or-flight reactions, namely revenge and job insecurity, as well as various emotional resources, namely EI skills.

Our first research hypothesis postulated that incivility is positively correlated with job insecurity. Indeed, and in line with (Itzkovich 2016a, b), we found that incivility increased perceptions of job insecurity. Interviews with family members revealed that perceptions of job insecurity among participant-teachers centered on fears of being assigned to a different school, being fired or being demoted from senior teaching positions, as well as on fears for their professional reputation and standing. Previous theoretical studies have considered job insecurity to be a one-dimensional construct centered on the perceived ability to maintain one's current job (Vander Elst et al. 2011, 2014). Others highlighted the more complex, multidimensional nature of the concept (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 2010). In the present study, a quantitative measure, designed to focus on a general ability to maintain one's current workplace, was employed. However, in line with the above-noted multi-dimensional theoretical approach (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984), an added qualitative measure and analysis provided a more nuanced and multidimensional view of the studied experiences. Moreover, the current findings support claims by Rosenblatt and Ruvio (1996) that job insecurity exists in professions that until now have been considered secure, such as teaching, and extend them to preschool teachers.

The findings further confirm our second research hypothesis, indicating a positive correlation between incivility and revenge. In line with the negative norm of reciprocity (Helm et al. 1972) we found that once uncivil, interpersonal relationships were perceived as negative, participants retaliated and responded with negative reactions of their own.

Incivility has been identified as an emotional process (Zeidner et al. 2012b) with potential to invoke retaliatory, fight reactions - namely revenge (Lim and Teo 2009; Penney and Spector 2005). Our qualitative findings allowed us to account for some of the incivility-related motivational properties of revenge. In particular, we noted that teachers did not direct revenge behaviors against their students but rather demonstrated high commitment and responsibility towards them. Instead, revenge inclinations among teachers were directed at the Ministry of Education and/or at ministry supervisors. Such inclinations were expressed in spiteful intentions to leave work environments that were perceived to be unfair, unjust, unappreciative or unsupportive.

Interestingly, these revenge behaviors were encouraged and promoted by family members, mainly husbands. While some participant teachers did contemplate these suggestions, they did not typically follow up with actual revenge behaviors.

Our third research hypothesis, postulating that revenge among preschool teachers is positively correlated with job insecurity, was similarly confirmed by our findings. Previous studies focused on external factors that promote job insecurity, such as changes in job characteristics or workplace practices (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt 1984, 2010), including the onset of uncivil behaviors (Itzkovich 2016a, b). The current findings indicate, for the first time, that perceptions of job insecurity can be self-motivated. These findings may be accounted for by a two-stage process: first, revenge inclinations may trigger behaviors that are often regarded as offensive towards organizations, thus putting individuals at a relative risk of being caught and enhancing perceptions of danger. In turn, these perceptions might elicit fear concerning the ability to maintain the desired level of job security. The above mechanism is further supported by some of the qualitative findings from our interviews. As revenge was mainly expressed in decreased productivity, a clearly-observed variable, and as lower productivity may put some work-performance attributes (e.g. reputation) at risk, it is likely that revenge behaviors and revenge inclinations did increase job insecurity perceptions among participants in the present study and could do so in other settings.

In contrast with our fourth research hypothesis and with studies that demonstrate negative links between EI and bullying (Hutchinson and Hurley 2013), incivility in the present study was not negatively correlated with EI. Instead, our findings demonstrate positive correlations between incivility and both the SEA and UOE sub-factors of EI. It is possible that incivility experiences noted in the present study triggered processes of self-reflection which, in turn, increased self-

awareness. Similarly, one could argue that emotional resources facilitated thought, a process recognized as necessary for coping with emotional stress caused by incivility. Our qualitative findings similarly indicate a process of rumination and self-investigation triggered by incivility.

In line with our fifth research hypothesis, revenge was negatively correlated with all four sub-factors of EI. According to existing theories, negative emotional experiences such as revenge and incivility promote stress (Rijavec et al. 2010; Yoshimura 2007), and stress, in turn, may reduce the ability to utilize EI resources (Pearson and Porath 2009; Thompson 2010). Thus, while previous studies have indicated that EI can be learned and enhanced through certain social experiences (Goleman 1995), the present findings suggest that some social experiences can damage and impair EI skills. While the positive aspect of EI, centered on the ability to enhance it, has been referred to extensively (Bar-On 1997), the negative potential for social experiences to reduce or impair EI capabilities has scarcely been observed (Thompson 2010).

In additional findings, revenge was noted to mediate the relationships between incivility and the four sub-factors of EI. This could indicate that most of the damaging effects of incivility on EI may be mediated by vindictive behaviors. Furthermore, while previous studies have often described EI as a resource that mediates levels of stress and reduces the likelihood of uncivil behaviors by means of different cognitive and emotional processes (Zeidner et al. 2012b), the present findings suggest that the ability to use EI resources to counteract job insecurity could be impaired when uncivil experiences elicit vindictive behaviors. This latter process is supported by Thompson (2010) who postulated that revenge impacts both cognitive and emotional mental resources and reduces the ability to fully use EI and to function effectively.

Our sixth research hypothesis postulated negative correlations between various EI skills and job insecurity perceptions. The present findings did not support such correlations, suggesting that EI skills did not act as a buffer between incivility and perceptions of job insecurity. Furthermore, the ROE sub-factor was found to be positively correlated with job insecurity. A possible explanation for this correlation is that individuals who are better able to control their emotions (high ROE) may also be more restrained and less confrontational in response to uncivil behaviors, and therefore may perceive themselves less capable of either proactively responding to uncivil behaviors or resolving related conflicts. These failings, in turn, may increase their sense of job insecurity.

To sum up, while incivility towards students of different ages has been studied and discussed, and while short term and long-term negative impacts of incivility on students have been previously noted (Marini 2009), impacts of incivility on teachers have been significantly less explored, and reference to such impacts in professional literature is scarce. The present findings add to the existing literature by highlighting this aspect of incivility, which is often subliminal and hard to point at.

We suggest that this added knowledge should be incorporated into trainings for preschool teachers and could help raise awareness of the negative impacts of incivility and its consequences in educational environments. Furthermore, in light of the presently-observed negative impacts of incivility on EI, and the well documented protective role of EI skills in counteracting or mitigating incivility experiences among teachers, we suggest that active development of EI skills in educational staff- could provide both a more robust protective mechanism against the negative impacts of incivility and could create a more respectful and civil climate in preschools and in similar settings.

Several research limitations as well as directions for future research warrant mentioning. First, it should be noted that the cross-sectional nature of the present data might have undermined definitive statements about causality. Indeed, some relationships in the present model are likely reciprocal. For example, our analysis implies that acts of revenge elicited perceptions of job insecurity. However, it is equally plausible that those who experience job insecurity are more inclined to seek revenge.

Secondly, as we used single-source self-report survey measures for all constructs in the research model, common-method variance is a concern. Thus, as is often the case with cross-sectional designs that employ self-report perceptual measures, it is possible that some of the currently identified relationships arose from common-method variance. We wish to note that to overcome common-method bias we substantiated our findings using qualitative data from an external source, i.e. family members who shared incivility experiences, to some extent, with the main targets of incivility in this study.

Lastly, the explained variance values for the revenge variable and for the EI sub-factors variables were low and low-medium, respectively. Moreover, some of the corresponding beta values were relatively small. These may indicate a need for a more expanded model and for additional variables that could account for the variance in both the revenge and the EI variables.

Conclusions and Implications

Despite its limitations, the current study elaborates and expands on previous studies by showing, for the first time, the impact of incivility on preschool teachers. To date, research has largely overlooked the impacts of incivility on preschool teachers, this even though preschool teachers need high emotional resources to cope with on-the-job stressors and to serve as positive role models for children in their care (Kremenitzer and Miller 2008). As incivility is shown to have the potential to reduce emotional resources, the present findings imply that it is highly important to study the interrelations between incivility and emotional resources in preschool teachers. Furthermore, the findings indicate that beyond external drivers of job insecurity, self-behaviors can also elicit job insecurity perceptions. Such

individual self-motivated contributions to job insecurity perceptions have not been previously reported.

Several methodological aspects of the present study should be noted. The current mixed- methods approach with an added, external source of qualitative data, has rarely been used in incivility research and has served here to broaden and illuminate the quantitative observation.

In terms of its setting, the study was conducted in the Mediterranean region, where incivility has only been scantly researched (Itzkovich 2014, 2015, 2016a, b) and therefore extends the cultural and geographical data base with regard to incivility phenomena. Indeed, the almost exclusive focus of previous incivility studies on American and European contexts has been previously criticized (Schilpzand et al. 2016).

Finally, to date, the relationships between EI skills, adverse behaviors such as incivility, and negative perceptions, have only been scantly addressed, in the field of education. In view of the present findings, we hope future research will further elucidate the role of EI in mitigating both incivility and its effects in the field of education as well as in other fields.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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