

Temporal withdrawal behaviors in an educational policy context

Temporal
withdrawal
behaviors

Zehava Rosenblatt

*Department of Leadership and Educational Policy, Faculty of Education,
University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel, and*

Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky

*Department of Educational Administration, School of Education,
Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel*

895

Received 3 December 2015

Revised 31 July 2016

26 September 2016

Accepted 13 October 2016

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to investigate the differential relations between two teacher withdrawal behaviors: work absence and lateness, and two types of school ethics: organizational justice (distributive, procedural) and ethical climate (formal, caring), all in the context of school turbulent environment.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 1,016 teachers in 35 Israeli high schools. The GLIMMIX procedure was used to consider simultaneously the hierarchical structure of the data, as well as the two dependent variables (absence and lateness).

Findings – The results showed that lateness was negatively related to two relatively short-term aspects of school ethics: distributive justice, in particular for women, and formal ethical climate. Absence was negatively related to a relatively long-term aspect of school ethics: caring climate, in particular for low- to medium-level seniority teachers.

Research limitations/implications – The paper's theoretical contribution is to explicate the unique relation of each temporal withdrawal behavior to specific dimensions of the school ethical constructs studied.

Practical implications – In order to reduce teachers' temporal withdrawal behaviors, school management may need to attenuate policy that taps into organizational ethics, while considering the effects of school culture and turbulent environment.

Originality/value – This study offers a time perspective, which fine-tunes understanding of teachers' lateness and absence behaviors, while pointing out the unique relations of lateness and absence to school ethical within educational policy context.

Keywords Educational policy, Teachers, School ethical climate, School organizational justice, Teachers' absence, Teachers' lateness

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Two common symptoms of temporal withdrawal behavior normally considered dysfunctional for organizations are voluntary lateness and voluntary absence (Thomas and Feldman, 2008). The present study examines the relations of these behaviors to organizational ethics in the context of turbulent and diversified educational policy in Israel. Comparative studies maintain that context is a powerful factor of withdrawal behaviors. Addae *et al.* (2013) showed that absence legitimacy varies in different cultures, both between and within societies. It is likely that social culture shapes the educational policy context, and educational policy in turn impacts teachers' behaviors. The present study focuses on teachers' withdrawal behaviors regarding their perception of school ethics, while taking into account ethical aspects in the educational policy environment in Israel, the site of the present study.

Literature review and development of hypotheses

The Israeli educational policy environment: implications for teacher withdrawal behaviors

The Israeli educational system is highly centralized, and is controlled by the nation's Ministry of Education. The student population is ethnically diversified due to massive



International Journal of
Educational Management
Vol. 31 No. 7, 2017
pp. 895-907

© Emerald Publishing Limited
0951-354X
DOI 10.1108/IJEM-12-2015-0165

This study is part of a larger research project on temporal withdrawal behaviors in schools.

immigration to the country, and divided into Jewish and Arab sectors (Tubin, 2011). This heterogeneity impedes efforts at equal resource allocation to all groups and sects.

The Israeli educational system is highly turbulent for three reasons. First, politics plays a major role in the Israeli educational administration, as education ministers are appointed based on their party affiliation, and are often replaced (between 2006 and 2016 every Minister of Education served two years on average). Consequently, educational policy is tainted by the ideology and political inclination of the incumbent minister and ministry. Second, educational reforms have been introduced frequently in the past decade or so, in an effort to repair prolonged educational dysfunctions. The two largest and most influential reforms are *Ofek Hadash* ("New horizon") and *Oz Litmura* ("Power to change") (Cohen and Caspari, 2011). These reforms introduced dramatic changes in teachers' working conditions, in particular longer working hours in exchange for individual meetings with students with special needs.

These changes stirred controversial feelings in teachers, who believed that they were not fairly compensated for this unwelcome change in working conditions. Third, severe social problems impede the system's efforts to provide all students with high-quality education. The poverty rate among Israeli students has increased in recent years in a worrying pace (Ben David-Hadar, 2016). Most perturbing is the fact that the achievement gap between high- and low-socio-economic students is steadily widening. Students of low socio-economic background are more likely to be placed on less prestigious tracks in school, leading to lower chances of passing matriculation exams (Balas, 2015). Taken together, these characteristics of the turbulent Israeli education policy are likely to reflect on teachers' perceptions of ethics in the educational system.

School ethics: organizational justice and ethical climate

Organizational justice

Organizational justice refers to equity in the workplace (Greenberg, 1995). Organizational justice research has focused on two key dimensions: distributive and procedural. Distributive justice is rooted in equity theory (Adams, 1965), and refers to the perception of fairness of outcomes and allocations. Employees' perception of distributive injustice is elicited by a comparison between actual and desired/deserved rewards, resulting in a gap between the two. Applied to schools, teachers normally seek justice regarding distribution of tangible rewards such as salaries and fringe benefits. Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of rules, procedures, and treatment (Lind and Tyler, 1988). In schools, teachers would normally seek just procedures in regard to intangible rewards, such as recognition of their work and performance evaluation. Common factors of procedural justice are consistency in managerial treatment, universal application of organizational procedures, transparency of decisions and behaviors, and the opportunity to appeal.

Although both distributive and procedural justice reflects teachers' perception of justice in their respective organizations, the two concepts are distinctly different. Resh and Sabbagh (2014) argue that while sense of distributive justice can be perceived as the individual's evaluation of the gap between actual and deserved reward, procedural justice can be perceived as an institutional (school) feature. For these authors, "the definition of procedural justice seems to imply that it reflects organizational climate: the maintenance of accepted rules and regulations that are applied universally to all" (p. 54). Thus, it is suggested that perception of procedural justice develops over time, while perception of distributive justice may be local and momentary.

Ethical climate

Ethical climate is featured as another concept of organizational ethics, namely, organizational norms of behavior and decisions with ethical content as perceived by employees (Cullen *et al.*, 2003). In the present study, two factors will be used, taken from

Victor and Cullen's (1988) conceptual scheme: caring – a climate of concern for the welfare of all organization members, and formality – a climate of compliance with professional and social codes and regulations. In schools, caring may mean respect for students' privacy, compassion for under-achievers, and attention to faculty needs. Formality may represent an ethics of equality among teachers and students. It is typically based on clear and transparent school rules and procedures.

Temporal withdrawal behaviors: absence and lateness

This study employs a time perspective for examining the two withdrawal behaviors – voluntary lateness and absence. Withdrawal behaviors are modes of behaviors in which employees engage at work, but for some reason decide to become less participative (Camden *et al.*, 2011). Lateness and absence are temporal withdrawal behaviors, that is, they relate to, and are defined by, organizational time. Defining work by time is critical, because time is a scarce organizational and individual resource, and can be easily used or abused (Nätti *et al.*, 2014). As applied to teachers, the relations of the two temporal behaviors, voluntary lateness and absence, to school ethics will be explored, in the context of the turbulent Israeli educational environment.

Lateness refers to arriving at work after the expected arrival time (Koslowsky, 2009). Absence is “the lack of physical presence at a behavior setting when and where one is expected to be” (Harrison and Price, 2003, p. 204). Sagie (1998) distinguished two basic types of absence: voluntary absence, which is normally under the direct control of the employee and is frequently exploited for personal issues such as testing the market for alternative prospects of employment, and involuntary absence, which is usually beyond the employee's immediate control, such as illness, mourning periods, and maternity leave. In spite of the sometimes blurred distinction between the two (Miller *et al.*, 2008), the present study focuses on voluntary absence and lateness, on the assumption that unlike involuntary behavior, this type of behavior is under teachers' control, hence may be manipulated.

The relation of lateness and absence to school ethics

The present study will explain the presumed relations between school ethics and the two withdrawal behaviors through the use of two theories: organizational misbehavior theory, and exchange theory. Organizational misbehavior is a voluntary act of violating organizational norms and standards of proper conduct (Vardi and Weitz, 2004). Based on this theory, it is argued here that under certain circumstances, both voluntary lateness and absence may represent teachers' misbehavior, because both often feature an unethical element: being intentionally away from work despite being paid. In regard to lateness, because show-up time to class is often unrecorded, it may be easily abused by teachers (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2007). Regarding absence, even under a generous absence policy, as in the case of the Israeli public education system, teachers' decisions to take or refrain from taking sick days may include unethical considerations (Miller *et al.*, 2008). Studies on calendric absence trends (e.g. Alcázar *et al.*, 2006; Rosenblatt *et al.*, 2010) showed that teachers tended to be disproportionately absent on certain days of the week (in particular before or after weekend), indicating shirking behavior. In sum, because lateness and absence potentially include unethical facets, the study argues that these unethical behaviors reflect a response to school practices perceived by teachers as unethical and operating against teachers' rights and welfare.

This argument is based on Blau's *et al.* (2005) exchange theory. According to this theory, employees who feel deprived of valued organizational outcomes would respond by reducing their work contribution. Indeed, studies have shown that employees who perceived their workplace as unjust were also likely to engage in frequent lateness and absence, reflecting reciprocal behaviors (e.g. Tanhiala *et al.*, 2013). In the case of the Israeli school system,

teachers who perceive changes in their work format (longer working hours) as unethical, or perceive treatment of students of certain ethnicities as contradicting their moral convictions, may react by legitimizing their temporal withdrawal behaviors.

Differential relations of lateness and absence to organizational justice and ethical climate

In spite of the common temporal element in both lateness and absence, this study maintains that each shows a distinct nuance when the ethical sub-dimensions are highlighted. The hypotheses in this regard are based on the differential mechanisms characterizing lateness and absence, and on the different time span associated with each ethical construct.

Taking the literature on the relations between withdrawal behaviors and organizational ethics (Tanhiala *et al.*, 2013) one step further, it is argued here that diverse school ethics dimensions will be associated with each withdrawal behavior. Specifically, lateness will be mainly related to distributive justice and formal ethical climate, while absence will be more related to procedural justice and caring ethical climate. The rationale for these arguments is derived from the differing time orientations of the specific ethical dimensions. Lateness tends to represent a short time span, confined to a given working day (e.g. loss of a few minutes in the morning, or at the start of a class session). Typically the decision to be late will be relatively spontaneous. It is then likely that the decision to be late would be linked to short-term perceived ethical concepts. Both school distributive justice and school formal ethical climate seem to be concerned with teachers' rights, rules and regulations that ensure fair allocation of benefits (Klinsky and Dowlatabadi, 2009). These constructs have an immediate impact on the teachers, and may often imply short-term managerial decisions. Therefore, teachers are expected to react to these particular issues with the short-term withdrawal behavior in their power: lateness to work. Hence, hypotheses are as follows:

- H1. Teachers' lateness will be negatively related to their perceived school distributive justice.
- H2. Teachers' lateness will be negatively related to their perceived school formal ethical climate.

Absence, on the other hand, represents long-term planning, covering an entire working day or days; the decision to be absent is often pre-meditated. It is expected that teachers' absence will relate to ethical issues that represent school extended processes, such as consistent discrimination against particular groups. This argument may be supported by Resh and Sabbagh (2014), who maintain that procedural justice reflects organizational climate. Thus, perception of procedural justice is likely to dwell on extended and lengthy organizational processes usually characterizing organizational climate. When these processes are recognized as unfair, teachers may develop a tendency to avoid them altogether by being absent from work. Teacher absence may also be a response to one's perception that the organization (or management) "does not care." This may occur when teachers perceive the educational system as treating different student populations unequally and discriminately. Hence, hypotheses are as follows:

- H3. Teachers' absence will be negatively related to their perceived school procedural justice.
- H4. Teachers' absence will be negatively related to their perceived school caring ethical climate.

The moderating effects of gender and seniority

Gender

Studies indicate that women may be affected by distributive justice issues more than men, since they earn less and their promotion takes longer (Eagly and Carli, 2007). This gap is due

primarily to the unequal distribution of school administrative positions, where most top administrative jobs are held by men (Malcolm, 2008). In other words, female teachers experience more distributive injustice than male teachers. This assertion is supported by Altinkurt *et al.* (2015) meta-analytic study, where they found that Turkish male teachers had a more positive perception of distributive justice at work than female teachers. One therefore expects that female teachers will react to school distributive injustice more strongly than men. Because school policy tends to be less tolerant of absence than of lateness, and thus to inflict penalties on absent teachers, it is believed that gender will interact with school distributive justice in its relation to lateness (and not absence). Hence, hypothesis is as follows:

- H5.* Gender will moderate the negative relation of school distributive justice to lateness (stated in *H1*). This relation will be stronger for female than for male teachers.

Seniority

In a meta-analytic study on Turkish teachers, Altinkurt *et al.* (2015) found that teachers with ten years' experience or less showed a more positive perception of both distributive and procedural justice than their more senior counterparts. Naturally, low-seniority teachers will be more sensitive to the way they are treated by their respective work contexts than high-seniority teachers. It follows that a caring climate may be particularly important for low-seniority teachers during their induction and socialization into the school environment. These teachers are expected to react to a low school ethical climate by long-term withdrawal such as absence. Being relatively young, their time away from work may be used to seek an alternative supporting environment, or alternative employment. By contrast, high-seniority teachers, who are typically tenured and enjoy work perks and union protection (Liu and Meyer, 2005), are not necessarily expected to respond to caring ethics in their workplace with absence behavior, that often entails penalties. Therefore, the hypothesis is that seniority will interact with caring school ethical climate in its relation to absence. Similar effects in regard to the other process-related ethical dimension – school procedural justice – are not expected because procedures naturally tend to be more standard and structured than caring attitudes. Hence, the last hypothesis is as follows:

- H6.* Seniority will moderate the negative relation of absence to caring ethical climate (stated in *H4*). This relation will be higher for low-seniority than for high-seniority teachers.

Method

Sample

Participants were 1,016 teachers (67 percent response rate) at 35 high schools from a 52-school educational network in Israel. Only teachers who had worked at the school for more than one year were included in the study, to ensure that all respondents had sufficient time to develop ethical perceptions regarding their schools. Women constituted 68 percent of the sample. Participants' average age was 43.19 years ($SD = 9.42$) and average school seniority was 12.60 years ($SD = 8.48$). Most teachers (86.1 percent) were tenured. These characteristics roughly represent the composition of the teaching staff in the network under study, and in Israeli high schools in general (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

Variables and measures

Lateness. Lateness was measured by a single self-reported item about the length of recent lateness events and related reasons, adapted to the school context from a measure of withdrawal behaviors developed by Blau (1994) and Neal *et al.* (1993). Lateness was defined

as the number of times the respondent arrived six or more minutes after the bell in the previous 30 days. This measure is based on Blau's (1994) statement that arriving six minutes after schedule is unacceptable in many organizations. In schools where a class of students is waiting for the teacher, and six minutes constitutes more than 10 percent of a normal class session, lateness of this magnitude would be more detrimental than in most other organizations. Only voluntary lateness (unrelated to sickness or other causes such as a road accident, which are normally considered *force majeure*) was used in this study.

Absence. This variable was measured by the number of times (frequency) a teacher was absent in the course of five months (one school semester), regardless of the total number of days lost. This measure is believed to be the best estimate of voluntary absence (Steel, 2003). Studies of Israeli workers consistently report that frequency of absence is a more reliable measure than time-lost measures (e.g. Westman and Etzion, 2001). For this reason, absence has been measured by spells, ignoring each spell's length. The measure used in this study concerned absence beyond approved days off (e.g. not including maternity leave). A self-report measure was used, where teachers reported on their absences in the preceding five months. Because of the blurring effect mentioned above, specific reasons to determine whether a given absence event was voluntary or involuntary were not checked. Instead, absence spells, not length, were measured, as an indication of voluntary vs involuntary absence.

Rationale for the use of self-report withdrawal data. Self-report scales entail the risk of compromising validity due to inaccuracy caused by memory decrement and systematic bias (Blau *et al.*, 2005). A correlation analysis between aggregated teacher-level self-report scores and each school's recorded data yielded no significant differences in the average number of absences (Wilcoxon test, $Z = -0.392$, $p = 0.695$) and, therefore, determined that the self-report data were safe to use. This decision is consistent with Johns and Miraglia's (2015) recent meta-analysis, in which they concluded that a self-reported absence measure is generally valid.

Organizational justice. This 21-item measure was based on Moorman (1991), and adapted to the school context. A factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) yielded three factors, the first two of which represented the dominant types of justice: school distributive justice (five items, $a = 0.87$, 20.33 percent of explained variance) and school procedural justice (12 items, $a = 0.94$, 37.08 percent of explained variance). Based on the factor loadings, Four items were omitted because of low loading values (< 0.5). Similar measures of distributive justice and procedural justice were previously validated in an Israeli educational context (e.g. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Ishan, 2013) ($a = 0.87$, $a = 0.92$, correspondingly).

Ethical climate. Victor and Cullen's (1988) original 26-item measure was adopted for the school context. The Obvarimax procedure, which allows interdependence between variables, was used. This process yielded six factors, the first two of which were adopted for this study. The rationale was that each of the two factors accounted for more than 15 percent of the explained variance, while the next factors had lower levels of explained variance. The two factors selected were school caring climate (six items, $a = 0.86$, and 15.87 percent of explained variance) and school formal climate (nine items, $a = 0.87$, and 15.68 percent of explained variance). School caring climate and school formal climate were validated in previous Israeli study (e.g. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Even-Zohar, 2011) ($a = 0.83$, $a = 0.87$, correspondingly). For the remaining four factors, explained variance levels proved relatively low (6.85-9.61 percent).

Except for the questions about lateness and absence, responses were rated 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Background variables. Gender and seniority were used as moderators.

Analysis

Clustered data were used, where observations of two different dependent variables (absence and lateness) were taken from the same sample. The analytic approach was to consider the two dependent variables simultaneously, and their relation to a set of independent variables (school justice and ethical climate). The GLIMMIX procedure of SAS was employed for this analysis (SAS/STAT 9.2, 2008).

The GLIMMIX procedure fits statistical models of correlated data in which the response is not necessarily normally distributed. These models are known as generalized linear mixed models (GLMM). Data may have any distribution in the exponential family (which comprises many discrete and continuous distributions, e.g. Poisson, negative binomial). GLMMs are useful for various applications, including joint modeling of multivariate outcomes. The study data include observations of the same sampling unit, which resemble repeated measures. These allow a special form of multivariate data, where the multiple observations refer to different attributes. Absence was characterized by a Poisson distribution, while lateness was characterized by a negative binomial distribution. Separate analyses for these two variables would have ignored the correlation between the two outcomes, hence the choice of the GLIMMIX procedure. The independent variables in the study model were centralized.

In addition to direct effects, interactions between ethical factors and two background variables were considered: gender (binary: 0 = men, 1 = women) and seniority.

Results

The correlation analysis (Table I) showed that lateness was negatively and significantly related to both school distributive justice and school formal ethical climate. Absence was negatively and significantly related only to school caring climate. These results generally allowed us to move on and test the hypotheses. It was also found that women, more than men, tended to be late ($r = 0.05, p < 0.05$) or absent ($r = 0.14, p < 0.05$). It should be noted, however, that Pearson results should not be considered totally credible when the data are hierarchical and the two dependent variables are based on count measures.

Hypotheses testing: direct relations

A regression analysis of the GLIMMIX procedure (Table II) produced the following results: teachers' lateness was negatively related to schools' perceived distributive justice ($t = -0.74, p = 0.05$), supporting *H1*. Also, teachers who tended to be late perceived their schools' formal climate as unethical ($t = -2.44, p = 0.02$), supporting *H2*. As for absence, it was found related only to school caring climate ($t = -2.49, p = 0.01$), supporting *H4*. The relation between school procedural justice and absence was not significant, and so *H3* was not supported.

	Mean	SD	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Gender			-0.10**	-0.06	-0.02	-0.09**	-0.06*	0.05*	0.14**
2. Seniority	12.61	8.48		-0.06*	-0.03	-0.07*	-0.06	-0.01	-0.06
3. Caring climate	3.29	0.73			0.54***	0.37***	0.71***	-0.08	-0.11**
4. Formal climate	3.88	0.60				0.48***	0.35***	-0.09**	-0.04
5. Distributive justice	2.79	0.89					0.37***	-0.09**	-0.01
6. Procedural justice	3.67	0.76						-0.08	-0.07
7. Lateness frequency (log)	1.04	1.62							0.11**
8. Absence frequency (log)	1.24	1.18							

Notes: $n = 1,016$. Men = 0, women = 1. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Table I.
Means, SD, correlations

Table II.
The relationship
between lateness
frequency, absence
frequency, and school
ethics, controlled by
gender and seniority
(GLIMMIX analysis)

Withdrawal behavior	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i> -value	<i>Pr</i> (<i>t</i>)
<i>Distribution effect</i>				
Lateness	-0.16	0.97	-1.19	0.23
Absence	0.06	0.07	0.89	0.38
<i>Gender</i>				
Lateness	0.10	0.11	0.86	0.39
Absence	0.19	0.07	2.67	0.01
<i>Seniority</i>				
Lateness	0.01	0.01	1.56	0.12
Absence	0.01	0.01	2.91	0.01
<i>Distributive justice</i>				
Lateness	-0.18	0.11	-0.74	0.05
Absence	0.07	0.07	1.04	0.30
<i>Procedural justice</i>				
Lateness	0.09	0.10	0.89	0.37
Absence	0.03	0.06	0.52	0.61
<i>Caring climate</i>				
Lateness	-0.12	0.11	-1.14	0.25
Absence	-0.16	0.06	-2.49	0.01
<i>Formal climate</i>				
Lateness	-0.24	0.10	-2.44	0.02
Absence	-0.04	0.06	-0.72	0.47

Notes: Gender: male = 0; female = 1; df = 959

Hypotheses testing: moderation analysis

Interaction effects between ethical variables and background variables – gender and seniority – were tested for by two separate distributions (negative binomial and Poisson). Table III presents these results.

Gender. For female (but not for male) teachers, school distributive justice was negatively related to lateness: women who perceived their schools as practicing fair distribution were less inclined to be late ($t = -3.22, p = 0.01$), supporting *H5*. These results are illustrated in Figure 1.

Seniority. To test the interactions regarding seniority, three regression lines were formed: mean seniority (medium seniority), mean plus one standard deviation (high seniority), and

Interaction	<i>F</i> (<i>pr</i> > <i>F</i>)	Withdrawal behavior	Moderator	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>t</i> -value	<i>Pr</i> > (<i>t</i>)
Distribute justice × gender	3.25 (0.04)	Lateness	Male	0.08	0.11	0.74	0.46
			Female	-0.23	0.07	-3.22	0.01
		Absence	Male	0.07	0.07	1.04	0.30
			Female	0.03	0.04	0.61	0.55
Caring climate × seniority	4.83	Lateness	Low seniority	-0.30	0.12	-2.37	0.12
			Medium seniority	-0.12	0.11	-1.14	0.25
			High seniority	0.06	0.13	0.45	0.65
		Absence	Low seniority	-0.24	0.08	-3.19	0.01
			Medium seniority	-0.16	0.06	-2.49	0.01
			High seniority	-0.08	0.08	-1.01	0.31

Table III.
Simple slopes
(GLIMMIX analysis)

Notes: Gender: male = 0; female = 1; df = 959

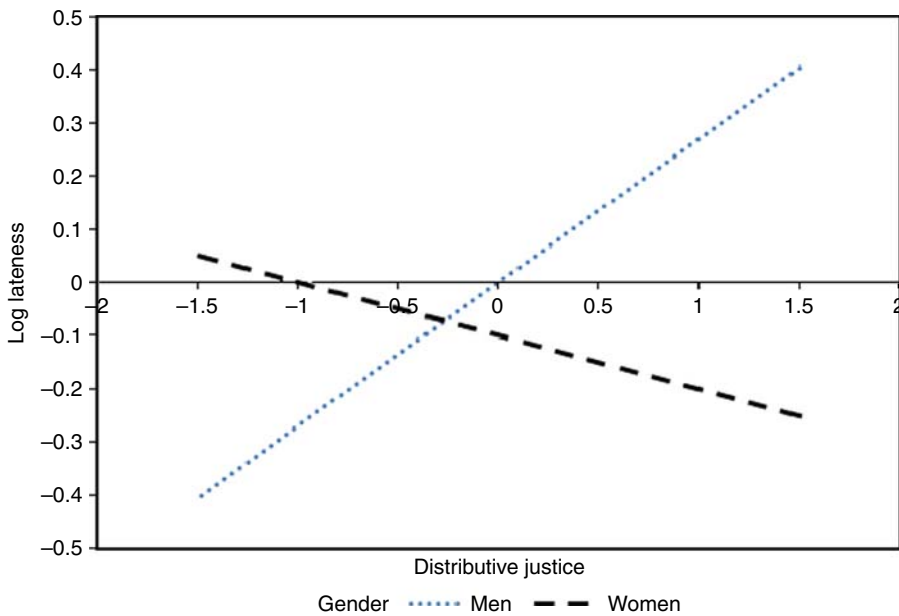


Figure 1. The effect of gender and school distributive justice on lateness frequency

mean minus one standard deviation (low seniority). For low-seniority and medium-seniority teachers, the more caring the school climate was, the less these teachers tended to be absent ($t = -3.19, p = 0.01$; $t = -2.49, p = 0.01$, respectively). This effect was not found for high-seniority teachers, supporting *H6*. These results are depicted in Table III and Figure 2.

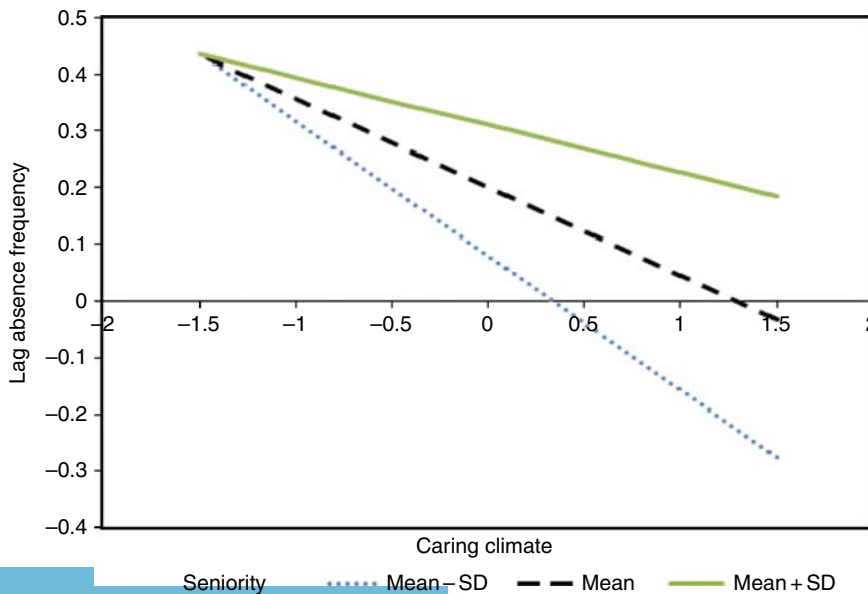


Figure 2. The effect of seniority and ethical caring climate on absence frequency

Discussion

Based on evidence that lateness and absence are distinct yet interconnected withdrawal constructs, the two behaviors were analyzed simultaneously as dependent variables. The study model posited that lateness and absence would be differentially related to specific dimensions of school ethics, based on organizational time orientation.

Results showed that while as hypothesized, teachers' lateness was related to school distributive justice and to school formal climate, absence was not related to either of these dimensions. Similarly, it was also found that as hypothesized, teachers' absence was related to school caring climate, while lateness was not related to school caring climate. However, contrary to the third hypothesis, absence was not related to procedural justice. This unexpected finding may perhaps be explained by the current context of school absence policy in Israel. Israeli absence policy is extremely structured; in teachers' collective bargaining contracts, absence is highly regulated (with detailed categorization of justified vs non-justified reasons for absence). Because absence behavior is covered by nation-wide collective rules, teachers might have tended not to associate their absence behavior with the clear school-based absence procedures, where rigidity partially protects against discrimination and abuse.

The study findings refine understanding of the temporal nature of teachers' lateness and absence. Previous studies focused on employees' withdrawal reactions to perceptions of organizational ethics (e.g. Burke *et al.*, 2011), based on theories pertaining to organizational misbehavior and organizational exchange relations. The present study focused on teachers' time manipulation in relationship with perceived organizational unfairness. Results may indicate that when teachers perceive their work environment as ethically compromising, they protect themselves by conserving their own time while abusing school time.

It is noteworthy that although the present analyses included models for which no hypotheses were generated, no such relations (e.g. between lateness and school procedural justice, lateness and school caring climate, absence and school distributive justice, absence and school formal climate) were found significant (Table II). These non-significant findings are important because they underpin this research model, where the two temporal withdrawal behaviors – lateness and absence – have distinct relations with ethical constructs based on short- vs long-term time orientation. While lateness, which often involves hasty decisions, was only related to relatively short-term ethical issues (resource distribution, school formal rules) and unrelated to long-term ethical procedures, absence, however, which is often characterized by pre-meditated decisions, was only related to a relatively long-term ethical issues (school caring climate) and unrelated to short-term ethical procedures.

Both hypotheses about the moderating effects of background variables (gender and seniority) were supported: a negative relationship between lateness and school distributive justice was found for female teachers (but not for male teachers), and a negative relationship between school caring climate and absence was shown for low- and medium-seniority teachers (but not for high-seniority teachers). These results corroborate previous studies on the role of these two key background factors in withdrawal behavior (e.g. Scott and Barnes, 2011).

It was also found that female teachers tended to withdraw from work more than male teachers, particularly through absence. These results are consistent with past findings that women, more than men, are likely to experience work-family conflicts (e.g. Hammer *et al.*, 2003) which may affect their attendance behavior at work. This means that for women, time conflicts are critical, so they will react to them with time-related behaviors more strongly than men.

Knowledge of the educational context within which the study took place is essential for an understanding of the study results. The Israeli educational system faces problems that reflect on ethical issues regarding students and teachers alike. These problems include widening achievement gaps among students that often go hand-in-hand with a differential

resource allocation policy, and teachers' perception of being underpaid for extra work following massive educational reforms. Because voluntary lateness and absence carry unethical elements (Rosenblatt *et al.*, 2010), Israeli teachers may react to organizational unfairness by legitimizing unethical behaviors on their part. This may be particularly true for relatively vulnerable segments of the teaching workforce, such as women and low-seniority teachers.

The study makes a theoretical contribution to literature on temporal withdrawal behaviors in two ways: first, by showing that the withdrawal response pattern to formal ethical facets is different from the response to procedural aspects. Second, by providing a time perspective for understanding teachers' withdrawal behaviors, whereby one's work time is used as a manipulative resource, in response to the perception of organizational (school) injustice and an uncaring approach to students and staff. On a practical note, the study results suggest that a more fair, just and caring educational policy may lead to lower symptoms of teacher temporal withdrawal, namely, lateness and absence.

Although these self-report data on absence correlated highly with recorded data available for some respondents, and are consistent with Johns and Miraglia's (2015) assertion that the self-report absence measure is generally valid, it is still recommended that future studies guard more effectively against self-report bias. It is also recommended that future studies conduct a deeper investigation of the specific reasons and motives for teachers to respond with temporal withdrawal to perceptions of unfairness and organizational misconduct.

References

- Adams, J.S. (1965), "Inequity in social exchange", in Berkowitz, L. (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, Vol. 2, Academic Press, New York, NY, pp. 267-299.
- Addae, H.M., Johns, G. and Boies, K. (2013), "The legitimacy of absenteeism from work: a nine-nation exploratory study", *Cross-Cultural Management*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 402-428.
- Alcázar, L., Rogers, F.H., Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M. and Muralidharan, K. (2006), "Why are teachers absent? Probing service delivery in Peruvian primary schools", *International Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 45 No. 3, pp. 117-136.
- Altinkurt, Y., Yilmaz, K. and Karaman, G. (2015), "The effect of gender, seniority and subject matter on the perception of organizational justice of teachers: a meta analytical study", *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 33-43.
- Balas, N. (2015), "Disparity in the educational system: who objects and who enjoys", State of Nation Report, Taub Center for the Study of Israel Social Policy, Jerusalem (Hebrew).
- Ben David-Hadar, I. (2016), "School finance policy and social justice", *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 46, No. C, pp. 166-174.
- Blau, G. (1994), "Developing and testing a taxonomy of lateness", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 79 No. 6, pp. 959-970.
- Blau, G., Tatum, D.S., Ward-Cook, K.W., Doberia, L. and McCoy, K. (2005), "Testing for time-based correlates of perceived gender discrimination", *Journal of Allied Health*, Vol. 34 No. 4, pp. 130-137.
- Burke, R.J., Tomlinson, E.C. and Cooper, C.L. (2011), *Crime and Corruption in Organizations: Why it Occurs and What to do About it*, Gower Publishing, Farnham.
- Camden, M.C., Price, V.C. and Ludwig, T.D. (2011), "Reducing absenteeism and rescheduling among grocery store employees with point-contingent rewards", *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, Vol. 31 No. 2, pp. 140-149.
- Cohen, A. and Caspari, L. (2011), "Individual values, organizational commitment and participation in a change: Israeli teachers' approach to an optional educational reform", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 385-396.

- Cullen, J.B., Parboteeah, K.P. and Victor, B. (2003), "The effects of ethical climates on organizational commitment: a two-study analysis", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 127-141.
- Eagly, A.H. and Carli, L.L. (2007), *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth about How Women become Leaders*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA.
- Greenberg, J. (1995), *The Quest for Justice on the Job: Essays and Experiments*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hammer, L.B., Bauer, T.N. and Grandey, A.A. (2003), "Work-family conflict and work-related withdrawal behaviors", *Journal of Business and Psychology*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 419-436.
- Harrison, D.A. and Price, K.H. (2003), "Context and consistency in absenteeism: studying social and dispositional influences across multiple settings", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 203-225.
- Israel Central Bureau of Statistics (2014), *Education in Israel: An International Comparison*, Ministry of Education, Jerusalem (Hebrew).
- Johns, G. and Miraglia, M. (2015), "Validity and accuracy of self-reported absenteeism from work: a meta-analysis", *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 1-14.
- Klinsky, S. and Dowlatabadi, H. (2009), "Conceptualizations of justice in climate policy", *Climate Policy*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 88-108.
- Koslowsky, M. (2009), "A multi-level model of withdrawal: integrating and synthesizing theory and findings", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 283-303.
- Lind, E.A. and Tyler, T.R. (1988), *The Social Psychology of Procedural Justice*, Plenum, New York, NY.
- Liu, X.S. and Meyer, J.P. (2005), "Teachers' perceptions of their jobs: a multilevel analysis of the teacher follow-up survey for 1994-95", *Teacher College Record*, Vol. 107 No. 5, pp. 985-1003.
- Malcolm, H. (2008), "I don't do the mothering role that lots of female teachers do: male teachers, gender, power and social organization", *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 597-608.
- Miller, R.T., Murnane, R.J. and Willett, J.B. (2008), "Do teacher absences impact student achievement? Longitudinal evidence from one urban school district", *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, Vol. 30 No. 2, pp. 181-200.
- Moorman, R.H. (1991), "Relationship between organizational justice and organizational citizenship behaviors: do fairness perceptions influence employee citizenship?", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 76 No. 6, pp. 845-855.
- Nätti, J., Oinas, T., Härmä, M., Anttila, T. and Kandolin, I. (2014), "Combined effects of shiftwork and individual working time control on long-term sickness absence: a prospective study of Finnish employees", *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, Vol. 56 No. 7, pp. 732-738.
- Neal, M.B., Chapman, N.J., Ingersoll-Dayton, B. and Emlen, A.C. (1993), *Balancing Work and Caregiving for Children, Adults, and Elders*, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.
- Resh, N. and Sabbagh, C. (2014), "Sense of justice in school and civic attitudes", *Social Psychology of Education*, Vol. 17 No. 1, pp. 51-72.
- Rosenblatt, Z., Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. and Shirom, A. (2010), "An organizational ethics perspective of work absence in Israel: the case of school teachers", *Human Resource Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 247-259.
- Sagie, A. (1998), "Employee absenteeism, organizational commitment and job satisfaction: another look", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp. 156-171.
- SAS/STAT 9.2 (2008), *User's Guide*, SAS Publishing, Cary, NC.
- Scott, B.A. and Barnes, C.M. (2011), "A multilevel field investigation of emotional labor, affect, work withdrawal, and gender", *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 54 No. 1, pp. 116-136.
- Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. (2007), "Israeli teachers' perceptions of lateness: a gender comparison", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 57 Nos 3/4, pp. 187-199.
- Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. and Even-Zohar, S. (2011), "Withdrawal behaviors syndrome: an ethical perspective", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 103 No. 3, pp. 429-451.

- Shapira-Lishchinsky, O. and Ishan, G. (2013), "Teachers' acceptance of absenteeism: towards developing a specific scale", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 51 No. 5, pp. 594-617.
- Steel, R.P. (2003), "Methodological and operational issues in the construction of absence variables", *Human Research Management Review*, Vol. 13 No. 2, pp. 243-251.
- Tanhiala, A., Linna, A., von Bonsdorff, M., Pentti, J., Vahtera, J., Kivimäki, M. and Elovainio, M. (2013), "Organizational justice, sickness absence and employee age", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 28 No. 7, pp. 805-825.
- Thomas, W.H. and Feldman, D.C. (2008), "The relationship of age to ten dimensions of job performance", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 93 No. 2, pp. 392-423.
- Tubin, D. (2011), "From principals' actions to students' outcomes: an explanatory narrative approach to successful Israeli schools", *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 395-411.
- Vardi, Y. and Weitz, E. (2004), *Misbehavior in Organizations: Theory, Research, and Management*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.
- Victor, B. and Cullen, J.B. (1988), "The organizational bases of ethical work climates", *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 101-125.
- Westman, M. and Etzion, D. (2001), "The impact of vacation and job stress on burnout and absenteeism", *Psychology and Health*, Vol. 16 No. 5, pp. 595-606.

Further reading

- Basar, U. and Sigri, U. (2015), "Effects of teachers' organizational justice perceptions on intention to quit: mediation role of organizational identification", *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 45-59.

About the authors

Zehava Rosenblatt is a faculty member in the Department of Leadership and Educational Administration at the University of Haifa, Israel, and also serves as Head of the Center for Educational Administration and Evaluation. Her main research interests are teacher accountability, withdrawal behaviors, and general human resource management applied to teachers and principals.

Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky is an Associate Professor at the Department of Educational Administration, Leadership and Policy, School of Education, Bar-Ilan University, Israel. Her research areas include organizational ethics, teachers' withdrawal behaviors (lateness, absenteeism and intent to leave) and mentoring through team-based simulation. Orly Shapira-Lishchinsky is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: shapiro4@biu.ac.il

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.