ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Israeli Teachers' Perceptions of Lateness: A Gender Comparison

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Abstract The study examines the relationship between distributive justice and teachers' lateness, focusing on the mediation effect of organizational commitment and taking into account gender differences. The sample consisted of 1,016 teachers from 35 high schools in Israel. Results, based on multi-level analysis, showed that, for women, organizational commitment partially mediated the relation between perceived distributive justice and lateness. No such effect was found for men. The findings are explained in terms of women using lateness behavior to establish a balance between their amount of effort and the measure of their perceived reward.

Keywords Gender · Lateness · Distributive justice · Organizational commitment · Culture

Introduction

Employee lateness, which is ubiquitous in many organizations, influences employees' perceptions and behavior, as well as the organizational climate and effectiveness, and carries financial costs (Blau 1994), such as loss of productivity. In high schools, it causes loss of time for principals, who have to find solutions for the teacher's lateness. It also disrupts the daily schedule and affects learning effectiveness and student achievement. When lessons do not start on time, teachers who want to complete planned material often continue their lessons into the break, which detracts from needed down

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O. Shapira-Lishchinsky Zefat Academic College, 11 Jerusalem Street, Zefat 13206, Israel time and can cause students to be late to their next class. Moreover, when the lessons become shorter, teachers may not cover all the material needed for final exams, leaving students to make up the difference on their own. This is clearly not as effective as studying and discussing these subjects in school. A tardy teacher may also have a negative influence on teachers who do arrive on time and are required to supervise the latecomer's class to prevent it from disturbing other classes. Such behaviors also impacts shared ethical values (Sims 2002), which are influenced by one's membership in a community or culture (Alder 1999; Payne and Landry 2006).

The purpose of this paper, then, is to investigate the effect of work ethics on teacher lateness, examining the mediating effect of organizational commitment and differences between men and women—an issue that has not received empirical attention thus far. Keeping in mind that lateness behavior and time perceptions tend to be culturally specific, this question is considered within the context of a specific national culture, that of Israel.

The best evidence concerning the impact of social influence on lateness, similar to absence behavior, comes from cross-level and multi-level studies that appear to explain the impact of unit lateness culture on individual behavior (Johns 2001). In order to test for a group-level effect that can explain individual lateness, a cross-level analysis is used (Blau 1995; Rousseau 1985).

Because lateness violates school norms and values and reduces the quality and quantity of educational work, it can be considered a form of employee deviance, which has been defined as the "voluntary behavior that violates significant organizational norms and in so doing threatens the well-being of an organization, its members, or both" (Robinson and Bennett 1995, p. 556). If teachers derive their values from the school in which they are socialized, it follows that their approach to what is desirable and to ethics will be similar to



those of their colleagues. Thus, the work ethic in the school can influence the lateness behavior of teachers.

Ethics are defined as a conception of what is right and fair conduct or behavior (Carroll 1991; Freeman and Gilbert 1988; Raiborn and Payne 1990; Velasquez 1999). Several studies have found that individuals who endorse the work ethics are more likely to persist at a task and to spend more time engaged in work-related activities (Greenberg 1978; Tang and Baumeister 1984; Saks et al. 1996). Furnham (1990) noted that the work ethic "is of potential importance to all organizational behaviors as it provides a theoretical concept for understanding and predicting work-related behaviors on both a group and individual level" (p. 397).

One important aspect of organizational ethics in school is distributive justice, particularly within the context of gender differences. Studies indicate that women earn less than men and are promoted less (Blau et al. 2005; Gerhart 1990; Heberfeld and Sherhau 1990) and that women may be adversely affected by distributive justice issues more than men (Lee and Farh 1999). In keeping with exchange theory, there is therefore reason to suspect that women would be inclined to be late more than men in order to achieve justice, balancing their timely or late arrival with the rewards they believe they get or do not get from the organization. There are also grounds to believe that, when distributive justice is perceived as low, commitment to the organization is reduced; hence, women are likely to be less committed to their organization than men.

Lateness Behavior

Lateness behavior is described as arriving late at work or leaving before the end of the day (Shafritz 1980); in the high school, which has a relatively rigid time schedule, it refers to lack of punctual arrival to each lesson. Following the progression theory of employee withdrawal (Koslowsky et al. 1997), lateness can be seen as a "less severe" form of withdrawal that eventually escalates into the "more severe" forms of absenteeism and turnover. In vast research efforts to understand and increase productivity, one area of concern is reducing these withdrawal behaviors, which disrupt work schedules and lower productivity (Cascio 1991). Sagie and colleagues (2002) estimate the annual direct and indirect cost of employee lateness to be \$737 per employee. Nonfinancial losses include associated negative emotions, diminished social contacts at work and a negative impact on job performance and satisfaction (Foust et al. 2006).

Lateness has been recognized as having "motivational" antecedents. Theoretically, it is classified into three dimensions: chronic, unavoidable and avoidable. Chronic lateness is a response to a bad work situation, disliked by employees. Relevant antecedents to chronic lateness are, for

example, organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Avoidable lateness (stable periodic lateness) occurs when employees have better or more important activities to do than arrive on time. Leisure—income tradeoff and work—family conflict may be positive antecedents to this type of lateness. Finally, unavoidable lateness is due to factors beyond the employee's control, such as transport problems, bad weather, illness and accident (Blau 1995; Blau et al. 2004).

Lateness, then, stems not only from unavoidable situations, but also from avoidable ones deriving from perceived unethical conditions. One example is when teachers choose not to come to school on time because their leisure time is more important than their work or because they dislike their work.

Cross-cultural and Gender Differences in Lateness

Organizational culture is one of the principal factors affecting individual motivation and behavior, in general (Kunda 1992; Schein 1992), and misconduct including lateness, in particular (Vardi 2001). According to Vardi and Wiener (1996), culture is defined as a system of shared values which places normative pressures on members of organizations. There are grounds to assume that culture influences lateness perceptions and behavior. People have certain beliefs and norms that help form their behaviors, including lateness (Koslowsky 2000). According to Vardi and Weiner (1996), in a culture where values and norms legitimize lateness, lateness may endanger the school's effectiveness in the long run.

Research findings have shown that, despite their heterogeneity within a country, organizational cultures are affected by national cultures (Soeters and Schreuder 1988; Hofstede et al. 1990) and ethical norms in organizations develop from national cultural values (Hunt and Vitell 1986; Parboteeach et al. 2005). National culture can be defined as "a collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group from another" (Hofstede 2001, p. 25). Parboteeach and colleagues (2005) argue that national cultures produce patterned ways of thinking and a set of shared meaning systems that impact work practices. Thus, national values about time may affect ethical norms about punctuality in schools and may influence teachers' lateness.

Studies indicate that time perception-including conceptions of work time, leisure time and lateness behavior—is culturally specific. People adopt cultural norms regarding behaviors through socialization (Brislin and Kim 2003). There are many examples of time-related communication breakdowns between cultures, even when a common verbal language is spoken. Hall (1959) lists eight rough time sets for defining punctuality for business appointments in the US, while in traditional eastern Mediterranean Arab cultures there are only three sets: no time at all, now (of



varying duration) and forever (too long) (Levine and Bartlett 1984). Another study found punctuality to be more important an issue in the US than in Brazil (Levine et al. 1980). Still another indicated that people in Western countries have different notions of work time and leisure time than those in the Middle East or Far East (L. A. Manrai and A. K. Manrai 1995).

People may have very different reasons for lateness, depending on their cultural norms. It has been suggested that people from developing countries who are late may be acting appropriately within a more flexible conceptualization of time than those from developed countries (Brislin and Kim 2003). Thus, lateness may also be a function of the cultural context and not only a statement about the individual's relation to the organization. In contrast, in developed countries, lateness is often an indication of job withdrawal (Foust et al. 2006). However, this ostensible dichotomy is not clearcut; there is no coherent definition of developing versus developed countries and certain nations fall somewhere in the middle.

If we consider the definition adopted by some writers (Payne and Nassar 2003; S. Calvert and P. Calvert 1996), Israel is one of the more developed among the developing countries (Saporta and Yonah 2004). Developing countries are usually characterized by large gaps between rich and poor, high birthrates and high mortality rates, and their economies tend to be based more on agriculture. However, Israel, like China and Singapore (Dickenson et al. 1996), has been characterized by economic growth, rapid modernization and "westernization." Moreover, Israel's economy is not based mainly on agriculture, nor are there high mortality rates. Finally, Israelis are more acculturated to a Western view of time. Thus, teachers in Israel are likely to perceive lateness as misbehavior, especially within the high school, where scheduling tends to be rigid. This perception may also be affected by gender, as research indicates that men and women handle time conflicts differently (Duxbury and Higgins 1991; Greenhaus 1998).

Women's lateness may also have cultural antecedents. Cross-cultural research suggests that cultural background affects motivations underlying women's employment outside the home. In developing countries, a wife's income is more a matter of survival and improving the quality of life (Schminke 1986), whereas in developed countries, women's motivations for joining the labor force include personal and professional satisfaction, in addition to financial need (Veroff and Kulka 1981). In Israel, female teachers are likely to be motivated by both professional satisfaction and financial need. Therefore, if they perceive injustice in school, they may use lateness as an expression of low effort and low commitment, so as not to endanger their jobs and threaten their income.

Studies on gender and lateness indicate that women tend to be late more than men for demographic and occupational reasons (Barling et al. 1994; Blau 1994; Gupta and Jenkis 1983; Hammer et al. 2003). They usually ascribe this to the tendency for women to endure workfamily conflict more than men (Boyar et al. 2005). Having a full-time job has not relieved women completely of their motherly duties. In a study by Karambayya and Reilly (1992), wives were found to restructure their work activities more than their husbands. This suggests that women's gender roles have been expanded rather than redefined. Society's expectation is that women will be more concerned about their family than their career and that family concerns will be given higher priority among women than men (Boyar et al. 2005). Such research, however, disregards perceptions of ethics at school, especially justice perceptions that may also cause lateness, especially among female teachers.

Gender, Ethics and Culture

Gender differences in lateness behavior may be related to differences in how men and women perceive the ethics in any organization. One commonly held approach is that women have different values and ethical views than men; therefore, gender differences in attitudes, such as to commitment and justice, are expected. According to Gilligan (1982), males and females have distinctly different moral orientations. Moral orientations can be traced back to Kohlberg (1969), who developed a six-stage model of moral reasoning. This theory has been criticized for inherently containing bias against females, as it fails to take into account that females may not base moral reasoning on a principle of justice, but rather may rely more on a principle of caring (Gilligan 1979). Women conceptualize moral questions as problems of care involving empathy, whereas men conceptualize them as problems of right and justice. These different sets of values lead men and women to differ in their perceptions of situations, to resolve moral dilemmas differently and to respond differently to the same set of occupational rewards and cost (Ameen et al. 1996). In general, women see themselves as belonging to an interpersonal network where the key task is caring, while men refer to a hierarchy of rights and attempt to be fair (Mason and Mudrack 1996). These different values and traits cause men and women to develop different work-related interests and practices. Therefore, men will seek competitive success and are more likely to break rules because they view achievement as competition. Women are more concerned with doing tasks well and promoting harmonious work relationships. Therefore, women are more likely to adhere to rules and to be less tolerant of those individuals who break them.

Another approach claims that males and females differ not in their underlying ethical models, but rather in the



manner in which they evaluate others' ethics (Schminke 1997). For instance, evidence suggests that women have cognitive advantages over men that help them to better process information about the ethics of others (Schminke et al. 2003). In a study of undergraduate business students, males and females elaborated different perceptions of a just society (Prasad et al. 1998). Meta-analytic research indicates that women demonstrate higher ethical standards than men (Franke et al. 1997), which suggests that they pay greater attention to ethical behaviors. Yet another study (McDaniel et al. 2001) found that females are more predisposed than males to ethical situations. Therefore, they are more sensitive to organizational ethics, especially to unjust events.

In the educational field, studies show that female teachers are exposed to negative ethical situations more than men, regardless of cultural context. For example, one US study found that male school principals encouraged male teachers to seek administrative positions even though they constituted a smaller group than female teachers (Tolbert et al. 1999). In developing countries, the situation is even more severe. There is a low representation of women in leadership positions within educational systems and male dominance in educational administration (Oplatka 2006), which, in turn, hinders the leadership opportunities of many women (Limerick and Lingard 1995). Men in key leadership positions are likely to recruit male teachers because they share similar attitudes and philosophies (Hill and Ragland 1995; Kanter 1977). Moreover, schools in developing countries tend to reflect the gender stratification of society and reinforce the more widely prevailing norms of the dominant male group. Men are expected to be promoted at school, as this conforms to the dominant male culture and preserves their advantage in society (Addi-Raccah 2006; Reskin and Roos 1990).

The feminization of school principalship occurs more intensively in liberal, industrial communities than in urban, traditional, conservative environments. In developing countries, women have much less access to a wider range of employment opportunities than do women in developed countries (Addi-Raccah 2002). For example, in East Asia, the industrial boom opened up employment opportunities for women, but mainly for the lowest-paying occupations, including those in the educational field (Handelman 2000). In China, due to the strong emphasis on male dominance in the traditional Chinese culture (Su et al. 2000), women hold only 13% of school administrative positions. In Muslim countries like Pakistan, there are reports of women in educational leading positions, but the power lies in the school boards, which are populated solely by men (Kirk 2004).

Women in administrative positions sometimes empower other women and sometimes reinforce existing inequalities. Some female principals act as social agents, promoting gender equality and changing the structure of gender power relations in the school (Schmuck and Schubert 1995; Cohen et al.

1998). Lee and colleagues (1993) found that female principals empowered female teachers more than men in similar positions. Women, then, can benefit from working under the supervision of other women (Cohen et al. 1998). However, women leaders have also been ineffective in advancing other women. They may prefer to assimilate into the male culture in order not to hamper their success or to avoid conflict and competition. These women distance themselves from other women to reduce the threat to their authority and effectiveness as leaders (Kanter 1977). This tends to give other women less access to high positions, thereby limiting their influence on decision making (Ortiz 2000). As a result, female teachers may perceive unjust rewards not only from male principals, but also from female principals.

Distributive Justice, Gender and Lateness

Early organizational justice theory (Adams 1965) introduced the connection between feelings of inequity in the workplace, work-related attitudes (e.g., organizational commitment) and behaviors (e.g., performance). Subsequent findings have supported this relationship (Colquitt et al. 2001). However, the role of gender was not considered in this body of research.

Organizational justice, which describes the role of fairness in the workplace (Greenberg 1990), focuses on the processes by which employees determine whether they have been treated fairly, and the ways in which these perceptions influence other outcomes. The two sub-domains that justice research has typically focused on are distributive justice, which refers to the fairness of outcomes an employee receives, and procedural justice, which describes the fairness of procedures used to determine those outcomes (Pillai et al. 2001). The present study focuses on perceptions of distributive justice, as it is based on the claim that unfair rewards in school, which accrue to female teachers, motivate more women to be late in order to equate their amount of effort with the measure of their rewards.

Many studies have indicated that women are exposed more than men to low distributive justice in the workplace. Women tend to enter occupations with lower pay, lower prestige and lower mobility (Sumner and Niederman 2004). In Israel, the average monthly wage in the education field in 1999 was roughly \$1,100 for women and roughly \$1,850 for men. In other words, female educators earn about 60% of the salary of their male counterparts. The main reason for this large discrepancy lies in the distribution of administrative positions (Swirski et al. 2001). Although teaching is considered a "pink" profession in Israel, with about 73% of the teaching force consisting of women (Addi-Raccah 2002), the number of male principals is disproportionate to the number of male teachers. In 2000, only 42.6% of secondary school principals in the Jewish sector were



women (Addi-Raccah 2006; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2002).

Female teachers may respond to this discrimination through chronic lateness, avoidable lateness and even what is ostensibly unavoidable lateness. Previous findings indicate that women take better care of their health and consult health services more often than men. This may not be due merely to women's awareness, but also to the medical tests and exams that apply only to women (e.g., in pregnancy). By contrast, men often deny their own ill health (Vahtera et al. 2006). To keep their jobs, female teachers can ascribe their lateness to medical issues more easily than men, even though the actual reason may be their feelings of injustice accorded to them at school. This leads to the first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1

When distributive justice is perceived as low, female teachers will be late more than male teachers.

Distributive Justice, Organizational Commitment and Gender

Organizational commitment has three dimensions: affective, normative and continuance. Affective commitment refers to the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue their employment with the organization because they want to. Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation to continue working. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization. Finally, employees whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they are aware of the cost associated with leaving the organization. They stay in the organization because they need to do so (Meyer et al. 1993).

Following exchange theory, it is reasonable to expect that, when teachers believe they receive fair and just rewards from their school, they are more committed to it: school policy provides rewards and promotion to teachers, and in exchange, teachers increase their commitment to their school. Support for this argument may be drawn from several studies. Cropanzano and Folger (1991) claimed that, when employees perceive just treatment from their managers, they are more likely to be loyal to them and to identify with the organization. Tyler (1990) found that the perception of organizational justice was higher in employees committed to their organization and weaker in those who valued their membership much less. Numerous studies on organizational justice have found distributive justice to be positively related to organizational

commitment (McFarlin and Sweeney 1992; Moorman 1991; Randall and Mueller 1995; Tang and Sarsfield-Baldwin 1996). It follows, then, that the higher the distributive justice that teachers perceive, the more committed they will be to their school. This is especially true of female teachers, who are more exposed to low distributive justice than male teachers. Hence,

Hypothesis 2

The positive relationship between distributive justice and organizational commitment will be stronger among females teachers than male teachers.

Organizational Commitment, Lateness and Gender

Teachers with a high level of organizational commitment hope to continue as members of their school and are willing to exert an effort for this. It is to be expected that they also try to arrive at class on time. Moreover, teachers try to maintain organizational membership and not to behave in a way that may be seen as disrespectful of the school's values (e.g., being on time for work). Therefore, the expectation is that teachers with high organizational commitment will show lower avoidable lateness. This hypothesis is supported by Meyer et al. (1993), who found that affective commitment was significantly negatively related to selfreported general tardiness. Several more studies have confirmed the relationship between commitment and lateness (Blau 1994; Blau et al. 2004; Dishon-Berkovits and Koslowsky 2002; Foust et al. 2006). As women's choices outside school are limited (Rosin and Korabik 1995), and as women in the teaching profession are able to cope more easily with the work-family conflict than other employed women, owing to their flexible hours and the short workday, it can be assumed that they are more committed to school than men and that the relationship between commitment and lateness will be stronger for them. In other words,

Hypothesis 3

In cases of high organizational commitment, female teachers will be late less than male teachers.

Organizational Commitment as Mediating Distributive Justice and Lateness: Gender Effect

As women tend to experience inequity in rewards more than men (Gerhart 1990; Heberfeld and Sherhau 1990), they are likely to be more concerned with injustice events (Lee and Farh 1999; Sweeny and MacFarlin 1997; Fields et al.



2000). Accordingly, the more injustice they perceive in school, the less likely they are to be committed to it and the more likely they are to be late than male teachers. This brings us to the final hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4

Organizational commitment will mediate the relationship between distributive justice and lateness among female teachers, but not male teachers.

The model of the relationships proposed in the present research is summarized in Fig. 1.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The study population consisted of 3,220 teachers from 52 high schools in the largest technological high school network in Israel. Participants were 1,016 teachers from 35 randomly selected schools, representing about 67% of the school network. Of these schools, 80% are in the Jews sector, the rest in the Arab sector. The mean number of teachers per school was 54.74 (SD=25.54), and the mean number of classes per school was 20.11 (SD=9.30). Teachers in each school interacted regularly during breaks and at teachers' meeting at least once a month. The sample included teachers working more than one year in their school, so that respondents had time to develop attitudes to their schools.

Data were collected by questionnaires. Of the 1,500 questionnaires distributed by research assistants to all the schools, 1,016 were returned—a response rate of 67.7%.

The sample was 68% women, and the average age of all participants was 43.19 (SD=9.42). The mean number of

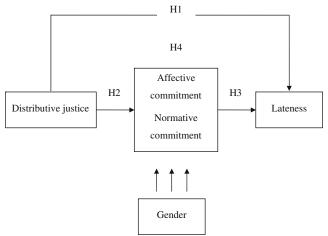


Fig. 1 Summary of study hypotheses.



years at the present school and in the teaching profession were 12.60 (SD=8.48) and 17.90 (SD=9.39), respectively. Tenure was held by 86.1% of the teachers; the others were engaged through temporary contracts. The average number of teachers' children up to age 18 was 1.36 (SD=1.31). In terms of education level, the majority (53.7%) of teachers in the sample held a Bachelor's degree and 35.7% had a Master's degree; the rest were without an academic degree.

Rationale for the Use of Self-reports

This study focused on self-reports of lateness, as, to date, Israeli schools do not keep lateness records. The attitudinal and behavioral data collected with self-report scales is somewhat problematic. Percept—percept associations attributed to common method variance bring in the possibility that relationships do not represent "true" findings. Moreover, there is a risk of compromising validity and of inaccuracy due to memory decrement and systematic bias (Blau et al. 2005; Nicholson and Payne 1987).

However, there are several advantages to using self-report measures of lateness. First, record-based assessments have been found to be inappropriate measures of attitudes, especially in sensitive matters (Johns 2003). Second, only self-report measures ensure anonymity, which was a condition for approaching the study site (Johns 1994). Third, selfreported absence data has been highly correlated (r=.64)with record-based measures (Johns 2003). Given that lateness and absenteeism are both considered withdrawal behaviors and have been found to be positively related (Hanisch and Hulin 1990; Koslowsky et al. 1997), there are grounds to expect a similar correlation between self-reports and recordbased measures with respect to lateness. Finally, while people may attribute less lateness to themselves than is actually true, owing to the deviant connotations of lateness, this study is interested in teacher's perceptions about their lateness more than their actual behavior. Johns (2003) argued that, despite the proclivity of absence researchers to rely on organizational records, self-reports are used with regularity. One of main reasons is that we are interested in how observers view and react to absenteeism. The same can be said for lateness. In sum, from a research standpoint, even if an organization keeps lateness records and allows access to them, there may be poor organizational record-keeping or insufficient data which will prevent lateness behavior from being operationalized and studied (Blau 1994). Hence, self-report measures of lateness may be a necessary research strategy.

Variables and Instruments

Lateness Lateness was measured by a single item adapted from a measure of withdrawal behaviors developed by Blau (1994) and by Neal and colleagues (1993). Specifically,

participants were asked: "Over the past thirty days, how many times were you late to class? (For the purpose of this research, lateness is defined as arriving six or more minutes after the bell.)" The use of a frequency measure to assess avoidable lateness is based on studies of absenteeism, which found frequency to be an appropriate indicator of voluntary absences (Dalton and Mesch 1991; Sagie 1998). The choice of a 30-day period over which to report lateness was based on a pilot study in which teachers were asked about a reasonable time span in which lateness could be remembered. Following Johns's (1994) discussion of selfreport absence measures, this time span appears to be long enough to enhance reliability, but short enough to minimize memory loss, which may provide a valid picture of lateness in schools. The rationale for defining lateness as 6 min or more draws on previous studies showing that this time span is not normatively acceptable in various organizations. In hospitals, lateness was defined as at least 8 min past the beginning of the shift, whereas in banks, it was defined as at least 5 min after the start of the shift (Blau 1994). Teachers in a pilot study confirmed that less than 6 min is perceived as legitimate lateness.

Distributive justice This instrument, based on Moorman's (1991) 21-item questionnaire, assessed the perceived fairness of various work outcomes at school, including pay level, work schedule and work load. These issues were found to be the ones most relevant to teachers' work (five items, a=.87, 20.33% of explained variance). Sample item: "I am fairly paid or rewarded considering my job responsibilities." Possible responses fell along a 5-point Likert-like scale (1 = low; 5 = high).

Organizational commitment Factor analysis (principal components, Varimax rotation) based on Meyer and Allen's (1997) original 22-item measure, yielded six factors, of which the first two, representing the dominant commitments, were selected for the present study. Thus, affective commitment tapped teachers' perceptions of why they wanted to remain in their school (seven items, a=.89, 21.54% explained variance). Sample item: "I really feel as if this school's problems are my own." Normative commitment tapped teachers' perceptions of why they ought to remain in their school (six items, a=.83, 13.65% explained variance). Sample item: "One of the major reasons I continue to teach in this school is that I believe that loyalty is important." Possible responses fell along a 5-point Likert-like scale (1 = low; 5 = high).

Data Analysis

Studies have shown that smaller units within the organization may have separate perceived norms for lateness (Blau 1985; 1995). It may be possible for someone to arrive late without experiencing any sanctions, whereas in other unit any form of lateness is frowned upon (Koslowsky 2000). Hence, norms and lateness culture within the unit often specify the level of lateness expected from someone. Analogous to absence research (Gellatly and Luchak 1998; Markham and McKee 1995), lateness research shows that lateness aggregated at the unit level accounts for the variance in the lateness of individual unit members (Blau 1995; Johns 2001). It may be inferred from these studies that a group-level effect for lateness should be investigated.

This research investigates the cross-level effects of school-level variables (distributive justice, organizational commitment) on teachers' lateness, at the same time controlling for the effects of certain school characteristics. Due to the nested structure of the data (teachers within schools), a multi-level analysis was used and hierarchical linear modeling (Bryk and Raudenbush 1992; Rosenblatt and Shirom 2005) was employed.

While the classical procedure for nested data is the Mixed model, that SAS procedure is for normal data. As the dependent variable of lateness ruled out the assumption of normal distribution, the GENMOD procedure was used instead. This procedure, which applies a Poisson distribution, allows us to take into account the overdispersion which is inherent in lateness data (Gardner et al. 1995). This study applied the method of Kenny et al. (1998) to test for mediation, rather than the structural equation model, which is unable to analyze hierarchical data.

According to Kenny et al. (1998), four criteria need to be met to support mediated relationships. First, the independent variable (distributive justice) has to be related to the mediator (affective and normative commitment). Second, the independent variable has to be related to the dependent variable (lateness). Third, the mediators must be related to the dependent variable when the independent variable is included in the model. Finally, the relationship between independent and dependent variables must disappear when controlling for the mediator variable. If the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable is reduced but remains significant in the presence of the mediator, there is evidence of partial mediation.

This study is part of a larger study that also examined ethical climate, tendency to misbehave, absenteeism and intent to leave among teachers.

Results

Table 1 presents individual-level descriptive statistics for the variables in the study. In general, the higher the perceived distributive justice, the lower the lateness; and the higher the normative commitment, the lower the



Table 1 Individual-level means, standard deviations and correlations (self-reports).

		M	SD	2	3	4	5
1	Gender ^a			085**	.009	031	.055
2	Distributive justice	2.79	.89	(.87)	.295**	.345**	085**
3	Affective commitment	3.95	.77	_	(.89)	.676**	061
4	Normative commitment	3.53	.83	_	=	(.83)	086**
5	Lateness	1.04	1.62	-	-	-	-

^a Men = 0, women = 1, **p<.01, 5-point Likert-like scale (1 = low; 5 = high).

lateness. Men tend to perceive distributive justice as higher than women. Moreover, a significant difference was found between men's and women' mean scores for distributive justice (M=2.90 and 2.74, respectively, t (987)=2.29, p<.05). It was also found that women tended to report lateness (M=1.09, SE=1.64) more than men (M=.90, SE=1.59), but no significant difference was found between them (t (985)=2.50, p=.30). These findings should, however, be treated with caution, as the correlation table does not account for the nested nature of the data.

Regression results (Table 2) support Hypothesis 1, suggesting that women tend to be late more than men when distributive justice is perceived as low. Using the GENMOD procedure, with gender as an additional independent variable, results point to a significant difference between men and women in the relationship between distributive justice and lateness. Figure 2 provides a graphic illustration of the significant interactions from Table 2. For women, a negative relationship was found between distributive justice and lateness; for men, there was almost no change in the relationship.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. The results in Table 3 indicate that distributive justice was associated positively with organizational commitment (affective, normative) more for men than for women. To investigate the gender effect, the Mixed model of SAS was used, with gender

Table 2 Regression analysis of the interaction effect of distributive justice and gender on lateness.

Variable	В	SE
Constant	.6822***	.1984
Distributive justice	2301***	.0639
Gender (men)	8920**	.2989
Gender (women)	.0000	.0000
Distributive justice X men	.2848**	.0979
Distributive justice X women (reference point)	.0000	.0000

^{**}p<.01, ***p<.001 (GENMOD procedure).

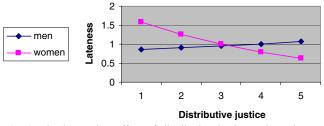


Fig. 2 The interaction effect of distributive justice and gender on lateness.

serving as an additional independent variable of interaction between distributive justice and the two dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative). No significant gender difference was found in predicting affective commitment or normative commitment.

Findings also support Hypothesis 3, whereby women are expected to be late less than men when organizational commitment is high. Again, the GENMOD procedure was used, with gender serving as an additional independent variable between the two dimensions of organizational commitment and lateness. A significant difference was found between men and women in predicting both affective and normative commitment (Table 4). Figures 3 and 4 present the significant interactions found in Table 4. For women, there was a negative relationship between both dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, normative) and lateness; for men, change in the relationships was negligible.

Finally, Table 5 presents results of the hierarchical analyses following the steps suggested by Kenny et al. (1998) to test for mediated relationships. For women, when affective commitment and distributive justice were entered into the equation, the latter significantly predicted lateness. The same was true of normative commitment and distributive justice. Unexpectedly, when affective and normative commitments were entered *together* with distributive justice, distributive justice and normative commitment significantly predicted lateness while affective commitment did not. This may be explained by the strong correlation

Table 3 Distributive justice related to affective and normative commitment (men/women).

	Affective commitment		Normative commitment	
	В	SE	В	SE
Distributive justice— women	.1498***	.0312	.1968***	.0343
Distributive justice—men	.2373***	.0488	.2714***	.0484

^{***}p<.001 (Mixed procedure).



Table 4 Regression analysis of the interaction effect of organizational commitment (affective/normative) and gender on lateness.

Variable	В	SE	Variable	В	SE
Constant	.8155**	.2696	Constant	.8341**	.2415
Affective commitment	1908**	.0662	Normative commitment	2213**	.0677
Gender (men)	-1.214**	.4189	Gender (men)	-1.259**	.4614
Gender (women)	.0000	.0000	Gender (women)	.0000	.0000
Affective commitment X men	.2788**	.1078	Normative commitment X men	.3279**	.1242
Affective commitment X women (reference point)	.0000	.0000	Normative commitment X women (reference point)	.0000	.0000

^{**}p<.01 (GENMOD procedure).

(due to multicollinearity) between affective and normative commitment (r=.676**). These results partially support Hypothesis 4, suggesting that affective and normative commitment partially mediate the relationship between distributive justice and lateness, since in all the models investigated that included affective and/or normative commitment (models 2–4), the relationship between distributive justice and lateness was lower than this relationship without organizational commitment (model 1). This mediating relationship was not found among male teachers. Figure 5 illustrates the mediation effect.

Discussion

The main finding in the present study is that organizational commitment partially mediates the relationship between distributive justice and lateness for women, but not for men. Perceptions of higher distributive justice appear to increase female teachers' commitment to their school and decrease their lateness. Conversely, when female teachers perceive lower distributive justice in school, they tend to be late more than men. This is the first study in which the perception of justice in school was shown to be related to lateness by means of organizational commitment, with the inclusion of a gender effect. These results suggest that women tend to be late more than men not only because of

work–family conflict and health concerns (Boyar et al. 2005; Vahtera et al. 2006). Further, they support studies that point to a distinction between men's and women's ethical perceptions (e.g., Franke et al. 1997; Schminke et al. 2003; McDaniel et al. 2001).

Despite changes in women's perceptions of their career and the blurring of conventional gender roles, as more and more women join the work force, they are increasingly exposed to negative distributive justice. We still find more teachers who are women than men, more principals who are men than women, and higher salaries allotted to men than women in the educational fields. Consequently, women are likely to be more sensitive than men to unjust rewards. In this sense, the results of the current study enrich Gilligan's (1982) and Ameen et al.'s (1996) approach in that women today focus not only on caring, interaction and process, but also on rewards. As the study findings suggest, through lateness, they establish a balance between their amount of effort and the measure of their reward.

Another interesting finding concerns the stronger positive relationship for women than for men between distributive justice and lateness. Previous studies have not focused on this relationship (an exception is Iverson and Deery 2001). Perhaps, following exchange theory and Adam's (1965) equity theory, lateness is the easy way, especially for women, to balance efforts and rewards by working less without risking their jobs and without

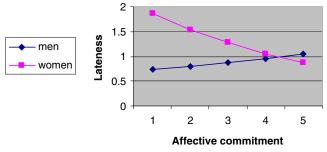


Fig. 3 The interaction effect of affective commitment and gender on lateness.

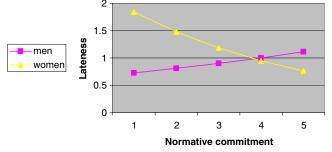


Fig. 4 The interaction effect of normative commitment and gender on lateness.



Table 5 Mediation of the relationship of distributive justice with lateness by affective and normative commitment.

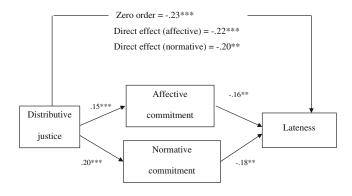
Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Zero order		Mediated effect with affective commitment		Mediated effect with normative commitment		Mediated effect with affective and normative commitment	
	В	SE	В	SE	В	SE	В	SE
Women								
Distributive justice	2336***	.0626	2197***	.0618	2050**	.0626	2049***	.0624
Affective commitment			1592**	.0588			0450	.0764
Normative commitment					1840**	.0643	1595*	.0826
Men								
Distributive justice	.0595	.0846	.0461	.0873	.0462	.0869	.0461	.0873
Affective commitment			.0740	.0890			.0586	.1464
Normative commitment					.0561	.1206	.0198	.1818

^{*}p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001 (GENMOD procedure).

damaging the climate in the organization, adopting the least severe of the withdrawal behaviors.

Like other studies (Dishon-Berkovits and Koslowsky 2002; Koslowsky 2000), the current research found a relation between lateness and affective and normative organizational commitment. However, the present results point to a gender effect in this relationship. This relationship was found to be extremely negative for women, whereas there was almost no change in the relationship for men.

The study findings suggest that, by identifying and understanding the barriers to women's advancement in the educational field, considering the culture and social context of female teachers, we can contribute to the improved position of women in the educational field. This, in turn, may increase their perceptions of justice and commitment and reduce their withdrawal from work through lateness.



p<.01, *p<.001

Fig. 5 Summary of coefficient modeling results (women). **p<.01, ***p<.001. The Bs in the relationship between affective commitment and lateness, and between normative commitment and lateness, are taken from models 2 and 3, respectively, and not from model 4 (see Table 5).

Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this study is its usage of self-reports of lateness, since, to date, most Israeli schools do not keep lateness records. Therefore, a challenge exists to expand the accuracy of lateness study through record keeping, by having teachers sign attendance cards during the workday. This can be implemented once principals grasp the high cost of lateness, not just as an economic consideration, but also taking into account the cost to student achievement and the ethical climate in the school.

A second limitation is that the time span of reported lateness was a month. This time span is important, as it may be associated with random error and systematic bias in self-reports of lateness. However, while extending the time frame of the self-report would increase reliability, it could also threaten validity and accuracy because of the potential for memory decrement, systematic bias or both.

A third limitation has to do with the generalizability of results. This study focuses on the lateness perceptions of male and female teachers in Israel. Further study is needed to enhance our understanding of lateness behavior, considering gender effects in international and cross-cultural contexts. Ideas about lateness are culturally specific and may vary widely from country to country. Furthermore, the sample included only teachers; future replications may allow for generalizations of broader scope in the public sector.

Despite the costs associated with employee lateness, studies of lateness in general, and its relation to distributive justice in particular, are scarce. The present research suggests the need for further investigation of lateness, especially from an ethical point of view. As the focus here was on the influence of distributive justice and commitment on lateness, subsequent studies might consider additional factors, such as lateness culture and coworker support.



Finally, the findings of this study suggest that research on lateness should take into account gender differences in the perception of justice in the organization. Additional research of this sort may improve the ability to explain and predict lateness of male and female teachers. This is especially important at a time when women's status in the workplace is changing.

In sum, this paper describes how distributive justice and organizational commitment can enhance our understanding of task-related effort, such as overcoming lateness, by consideration of gender differences in Israeli schools. More empirical research is needed to further test the relationships. To this end, researchers will need to uncover the real reasons for lateness, going beyond extrinsic factors (unavoidable lateness) and exploring intrinsic ones, such as perceptions of injustice in their organization.

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