

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

**Perception of the Psychological Contract Violation
as a Mediator between School Environment and
Utilization of Instruction Hours in High Schools in
Israel**

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Abstract

In an era when policymakers discuss the essence of the school's role, in the number of hours utilized for instruction and their effectiveness, one should take into account the tests in school that examine the school environment in the Israeli school system . The school climate is tested time and time again as internal and external school tests. An example of this is the Meitzav questionnaire (school efficiency and growth indices) in primary and middle schools. The basis of the school atmosphere is primarily the staff, and therefore it is appropriate to examine the school atmosphere in the school, by teachers and management staff, and its impact on the number of hours utilized for instruction in junior high schools and high schools. This work is unique, in that it brings the perception of the psychological contract violation to the fore, as it relates to the school atmosphere and the number of hours utilized for instruction.

The aim of this study is to identify the model that deals with the number of hours utilized for instruction, while utilizing the resources of human capital; and at the same time, understanding that the perception of the psychological contract violation between the school administration and the educational staff influences the number of hours utilized for instruction. The perception of the psychological contract violation acts as a mediator between the school climate, (which includes the organizational culture, the organizational climate and the ethical climate) and the number of hours utilized for instruction measured by the number of teaching hour cancellations due to teacher absenteeism, illness and school activities.

In the literature, the number of hours utilized for instruction is often measured by student achievement. The uniqueness of this study is the examination of the number of hours utilized for instruction from other aspects: lesson cancellations due to teacher

absenteeism and school activities. In addition, the perception of the psychological contract violation in the field of education as a mediator between the school atmosphere and the number of hours utilized for instruction, will be observed from the number of teaching hours actually received by the student in the school and not as it has been measured up until now.

The study population consisted of 314 educational staff, teachers and principals, who teach in junior high schools and high schools while representing the various districts and the different populations (regular and special education, state and state-religious) in the Jewish sector. The present study included five questionnaires that were answered by the participants. In addition, they included self-reports regarding lesson cancellations due to teacher absenteeism and school activities. The research data was collected during the 2012-2013 school year.

The main research hypotheses are:

1. The correlation between the perception of the positive atmosphere in the school (including organizational culture, organizational climate and ethical climate) and the perception of the psychological contract violation among teachers will be negative.
2. The correlation between the perception of the psychological contract violation among teachers and the number of hours utilized for instruction (which was determined by the cancellation of lessons due to teachers' absences for illness and due to school activities), will be positive.
3. The perception of the psychological contract violation among teachers will mediate the connection between the school atmosphere and the number of hours utilized for instruction.

This study found that the perception of the psychological contract violation among educators mediates the relationship between one dimension of the school atmosphere: "organizational culture" and one dimension of the number of hours utilized for instruction: "rate of cancellation of school activities". Thus, in cases where there is psychological contract violation, the organizational culture of the school is low and the number of hours utilized for instruction is lower, meaning that there are many more cancellations.

In most studies, it was found that the number of hours utilized for instruction and their effectiveness are measured mainly by student achievement. In this study, the emphasis was placed on the number of hours utilized for instruction in terms of class cancellations, and a direct negative correlation was found between the positive school atmosphere and the cancellation of classes. Despite the expectation that a teacher would happily respond to class cancellations due to school activities, it was found that a teacher who does not meet the requirements of the matriculation certificate sees this as a psychological contract violation between him and the school administration, which is reflected in a lower school positive atmosphere.

Theoretically, the present study is based on the attitudes of teachers and principals regarding organizational culture, organizational climate, ethical climate, and violation of the perception of the psychological contract. In this study, the variable of the psychological contract violation was examined as a mediator between the school atmosphere and the number of hours utilized for instruction, with an emphasis on the hours of instruction that the student actually received at school, without regard to the students' achievements. This study contributes to the knowledge of the importance of the perception of the psychological contract violation in the school as a factor that affects the teaching hours and their optimal utilization.

In practical terms, the study gives a general picture of what is going on inside educational institutions in terms of ministry of education requirements for teaching hours. Current findings are encouraging school administrators in particular and the management of the Ministry of Education, in general, to test the number of hours utilized for instruction in junior high schools and high schools, where The Ministry of Education has no reliable data, except for those reported independently by the school administration.

Methodologically, in the current study, AMOS software was used to examine the relationships between variables, as well as a formula that is tested for the mediator variable and its effect. Using the Structural Equation Model (SEM), it was found that the more positive the school atmosphere, the less the psychological contract was violated, and the greater the number of hours utilized for instruction.

Most of the previous studies, since the 1970s, have discussed school effectiveness and utilization hours of instruction in terms of student achievement and found that positive school environment indicates higher student achievement (Abadzi, 2009). Unlike those studies, the findings of the present study indicate the number of hours utilized for instruction, with regard to the number of actual lessons taught.

In the present study, a correlation was found between cancellations of teaching hours due to school activities and teacher illness, a relationship that reflects a 'culture' of lesson cancellations; this can be viewed as school policy that is projected from school management to the staff members. The 'culture' of lesson cancellations described here is consistent with the Ministry of Education's findings that the number of lessons cancelled exceeds the number allowed by law, which is 10%, as many teaching hours are canceled due to school activities, trips and ceremonies – which reflect school policy.