Teachers’ acceptance of absenteeism: towards developing a specific scale

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Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to develop and validate a measure of a specific attitude toward teachers’ absenteeism that predicts this behavior more accurately than other general measures of job attitudes.

Design/methodology/approach – Participants were 443 teachers from 21 secondary schools in Israel. In the first phase, the teachers answered anonymous questionnaires related to their general attitudes and their specific attitude through “absenteeism acceptance”. In the second phase, each teacher submitted copies of his half-year absenteeism records six months after the end of the first phase.

Findings – The authors used CFA to cross-validate the different job attitudes measures. They confirmed the construct validity of “absenteeism acceptance” through convergent and discriminant validity, finding relatively weak negative relationships between “absenteeism acceptance” and the general job attitudes. The criterion validity and predictive validity of the new measure was confirmed by intercorrelations that were found to be relatively stronger between “absenteeism acceptance” and the two measures of absenteeism (frequency, duration) than between the general job attitudes and these two measures. Quasi-Poisson regressions indicated that “absenteeism acceptance” emerges as a better predictor for both of the absenteeism measures than other general job attitudes.

Practical implications – This new measure will benefit schools and principals by allowing them to identify potential absenteeism antecedents and enable early intervention.

Originality/value – Whereas past research on work absence focused primarily on general attitude antecedents, the present study addresses a specific “absenteeism acceptance” measure. This measure can be advantageous in both understanding and predicting voluntary absenteeism more accurately than general attitude measures.

Keywords Absenteeism, Collective self-efficacy, Organizational commitment, Organizational justice, Schools, Teachers

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Work absenteeism is one of the major problems of human resource management in most organizations. It is “the lack of physical presence at a behavior setting when and where one is expected to be” (Harrison and Price, 2003, p. 204). Employee replacement costs and decreased productivity make up the direct financial costs of absenteeism. To these costs we must add indirect ones, such as the difficulties of replacing highly skilled employees who provide an essential service with equally trained personnel, leading to underperformance (Gaudine and Saks, 2001; Koslowsky, 2009).

Work absenteeism is a leading problem in educational institutions as well. In the USA, according to the District Management Council (2004), teachers nationally are absent from the classroom an average two weeks each year due to illness, personal days, and other excused absences such as staff development. Podgursky (2002) found that when teacher absences are compared with absences in other professions, teacher absences are almost twice as frequent. Pay for absent teachers in the USA was estimated at $2 billion per year (Miller et al., 2008) and £300 million in the UK (Bowers and McIver, 2000).
Data from studies conducted in Ecuador shows that the financial loss was nearly $16 million a year while data from India shows $2 million per year lost due to teacher absenteeism (Banerjee and Duflo, 2005; Duflo and Hanna, 2005). The overall cost of teacher absenteeism in Israel in 2002-2003 totaled $53 million, an estimate reached by combining the salaries of absent teachers with those of the teachers used to replace them (Rosenblatt and Shirom, 2006). Apart from the financial cost, work absenteeism in schools has a negative effect on the quality of education by reducing both achievement levels and student attendance levels in school (Bruno, 2002; Miller et al., 2007; Woods and Montagno, 1997).

Recent reviews of the organizational behavior literature and especially in the educational domain emphasize absenteeism as a variable related to general job attitudes, such as organizational justice and organizational commitment (Bowers, 2001; Felfe and Schyns, 2004; Martocchio and Jimeno, 2003; Myburgh and Poggenpoel, 2002). These studies showed that teachers with negative attitudes toward their workplace react by absenting themselves from work.

Based on Ajzen and Fishbein's (1977) model as it concerns the “attitude-behavior sequence,” we expect that a specific attitude toward absenteeism will more accurately predict absenteeism behavior than general job attitudes (e.g. organizational commitment, organizational justice, and collective efficacy). Understanding and better predicting absenteeism can benefit schools by allowing them to identify potential absenteeism antecedents, intervene early, and prevent more progressive forms of withdrawal.

For this purpose, we developed a measure of acceptance toward voluntary absenteeism that should better predict absenteeism behavior. Although extensive research has been conducted on absenteeism (e.g. Biron and Bamberger, 2012; Johns, 2003; Koslowsky, 2009; Sagie, 1998), there is no adequately validated measure of “absenteeism acceptance” in the current literature. Therefore, first, we used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) in order to cross-validate the general job attitudes measures. Then, a content validation approach was used to construct the measure. We then gathered preliminary evidence of construct validity by examining the relationship of the new measure “absenteeism acceptance” with other constructs, specifically general job attitudes. Then we examined the criterion validity and the predictive validity by investigating the ability of “absenteeism acceptance” to predict future absenteeism behavior above and beyond general attitude measures.

Theoretical background

Attitude-behavior correspondence: Ajzen and Fishbein's (1977) theory

Although the literature provides rich theoretical and empirical studies on employees’ absenteeism behavior, far more should be done to provide a better understanding of the similarities and differences among general predictors of absenteeism behaviors, because previous studies investigating the relationship between general job attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, organizational commitment) and absenteeism behavior showed conflicting findings across studies (Allen and Meyer, 1996; Brown, 1996; Cohen, 1998; Goldberg and Waldman, 2000; Martocchio, 1992). Moreover, in a case where a significant correlation was observed, it was, at best, low to moderate, thus the results have been disappointing (Blau, 2000; Carmeli, 2005; Koslowsky, 2009; Koslowsky et al., 1997).

These inconsistent findings point to the need to develop better measures to serve as predictors of voluntary absenteeism. In retrospect, these inconsistent findings are not surprising when considered by means of Ajzen and Fishbein's (1977) correspondence theory regarding attitude-behavior relationships. According to their approach,
attitudes toward behaviors are expected to predict these behaviors if the target and action elements of the attitudinal entity are identical with those of the behavioral entity. The relations between attitude and behavior tend to increase as the attitudinal and behavioral entities come to correspond more closely in terms of their target and action elements. Based on 54 previous studies, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) argued “that low and inconsistent attitude-behavior relations are attributable to low or partial correspondence between attitudinal and behavioral entities” (p. 913).

Consequently, to avoid a low level of correspondence, one cannot expect general job attitude measures (i.e. organizational justice, organizational commitment, collective efficacy) to strongly predict a specific behavior such as voluntary absence, because there may be partial or low correspondence between the attitudinal predictor and the behavioral criterion. Instead of relying on these general attitudes, a specific attitude toward absenteeism should be used to more accurately predict voluntary absenteeism. Moreover, a positive general attitude toward the organization does not necessarily signify that the employee believes that it is important to appear regularly at the workplace (Koslowsky, 2009).

**Toward examining the construct validity of “absenteeism acceptance”**

Construct validity is the extent to which the concept or construct to be measured was actually measured, and refers to whether a scale measure correlates with the theorized psychological construct. Construct validity evidence includes statistical analyses of the internal structure of the test (Pennington, 2003). Evaluation of construct validity requires convergent validity, that is, the correlations of the new measure must be examined in regard to other variables that are expected to be related to the new measure based on theoretical grounds; and discriminant validity, which describes the degree to which the developed measures are not similar to other variables that it theoretically should not be similar to these variables (American Educational Research Association, 1999).

Therefore, in the following sections we will present the theoretical background behind the relationship between general job attitudes and “absenteeism acceptance.”

**The relationship between general job attitudes and “absenteeism acceptance”**. Sagie (1998) distinguished between two basic types of absenteeism: voluntary absenteeism, which is normally under the direct control of the employee and is frequently utilized for personal issues; and involuntary absenteeism, which is usually beyond the employee’s immediate control (e.g. bereavement leave). This distinction is important because the individual’s attitudes impact only on voluntary absenteeism and is therefore the focus of our proposed study.

In this study we focus on general attitudes such as organizational justice, organizational commitment, and collective efficacy which in previous studies were found to be related to teachers’ behaviors in school, including absenteeism (e.g. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Rosenblatt, 2009; Imants and Van Zoelen, 1995; Rosenblatt et al., 2010). Based on Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1977) theory, attitudes may lead to behaviors, i.e. “absenteeism acceptance” may relate to voluntary absenteeism, thus, these general attitudes may relate not only to voluntary absenteeism, but also to “absenteeism acceptance.”

Organizational justice is used to describe equity in the workplace (Greenberg, 1995) and is used as a measure of how employees’ perceptions of equity are determined. Organizational justice research has focused on two key dimensions: distributive justice, which refers to the fairness of the outcomes an employee receives (Adams, 1965) and procedural justice, which describes the fairness of the procedures used to determine organizational outcomes (Pillai et al., 2001).
We anticipate that perceptions of justice may affect teachers’ “absenteeism acceptance.” Thus, if a teacher perceives that the school procedures or/and rewards in schools are not fair, there will be a negative attitude toward work. We then expect a negative relationship between teachers’ perceptions of justice and their “absenteeism acceptance,” such that the higher the teachers’ perception of organizational justice, the less likely the attitude of “absenteeism acceptance” at the workplace.

Meyer and Allen (1997) identified two central dimensions of organizational commitment. Affective commitment refers to teachers’ emotional attachment to the organization, and their identification and involvement with it. Normative commitment reflects their sense of obligation to continue working for the school. When teachers identify with, are involved in, and feel obligated toward an organization, they will exert their best efforts and try not to be absent from work. Thus, organizational commitment is expected to have a negative relationship with absenteeism attitude.

Collective efficacy beliefs are a “group’s shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 477). As a shared belief about the influence the school itself can have on student achievement, collective teacher efficacy is the product of the interactive dynamics of the group members and the emotional tone of the organization (Goddard et al., 2000), which means that collective teacher efficacy is a characteristic of schools as experienced by teachers. In this way, the scale of collective efficacy belief items are worded to measure efficacy as a school-level attribute in order to capture individuals’ perceptions of school capability (Goddard, 2001).

Collective teacher efficacy differs from a teacher’s individual sense of efficacy, in that it is a group attribute rather than the aggregate of many individual teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). Teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are based on perceptions of individual classroom performance, whereas collective teacher efficacy beliefs are social perceptions based on an assessment of the capability of the school faculty as a whole (Goddard et al., 2000). In this way, the collective efficacy scale differs from other teacher self-efficacy scales as teachers are asked about their perceptions of the collective, rather than their personal beliefs about their own individual efficacy.

Collective teacher efficacy constitutes a powerful factor which affects different arenas of the school organization and influences attitudes, as well as affective, motivational, and behavioral aspects of teacher functioning within the school (Schechter and Tschannen-Moran, 2006). Thus, collective efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, act, and motivate themselves. It can be argued, therefore, that a person with a sense of high collective efficacy will have a negative attitude toward absenteeism at work.

In summary, we expect that the above-mentioned general job attitudes will be related to “absenteeism acceptance” (convergent validity). However, in light of Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1977) theory regarding the non-specific of these attitudes to absenteeism behaviors, we expect the relationships to be weak (discriminant validity).

This assertion leads to our first hypothesis:

**H1.** There will be negative weak relationships between “absenteeism acceptance” and:

1. organizational justice (procedural/distributive);
2. organizational commitment (affective/normative); and
3. collective efficacy.
Toward examining the “criterion validity” and “predictive validity” of “absenteeism acceptance”

Criterion validity is a measure of how well one variable or set of variables predicts an outcome based on information from other variables (Pennington, 2003). In this study, in order to test the criterion validity, first we assess the relationships between the general attitudes measures and voluntary absenteeism. Then, we compare the new measure “absenteeism acceptance” with other measures already held to be valid, by assessing the ability of the “absenteeism acceptance” measure to predict voluntary absenteeism better than the general job attitudes measures (organizational justice, organizational commitment, collective self-efficacy).

Because in this study we collect the records of absenteeism at a later point in time, then we also refer to “predictive validity” (Messick, 1995). In the following sections, we will discuss the relationship between general job attitudes and voluntary absenteeism in order to provide essential background theory toward examining the criterion validity of our new measure.

The relationship between general job attitudes and voluntary absence. According to the “attitudes-behavior sequence theory” proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977, 1980) and Mueller (1986), attitudes which are normally directional (positive or negative) lead to behaviors (positive or negative). Studies show that people who behave in different ways also differ predictably in their attitudes. Positive attitudes lead to good performance and negative attitudes lead to poor performance. It then follows that general job attitudes (negative or positive) will lead to voluntary absenteeism behavior (high or low).

For example, studies on organizational justice show consistently that employees expect organizational decisions to be fair, and that they engage in negative reactions to the organization when they perceive that they have been subject to unjust outcomes (Greenberg, 1995; Moorman, 1991). From this perspective, absenteeism behavior is one means used to redress an inequitable employment relationship (Blau et al., 2004; Carraher and Buckley, 2008).

Regarding organizational commitment, previous studies indicate that teachers who are committed to their school make outstanding efforts on its behalf and try to contribute to its success by reducing their voluntary absenteeism. Gaziel (2004) found that teachers who express a high level of commitment to their school tend to voluntarily absent themselves from school less frequently. The Luchak and Gellatly (2007) study showed that employees who display high organizational commitment had a lower rate of absenteeism frequency. Cohen (2003), Somers (1995), and Meyer et al. (2002) provided more direct evidence for the relationship between affective commitment and work absence/attendance.

Collective efficacy is a belief about the capability of the group to organize and achieve a stated goal. Previous studies indicate that low collective efficacy among teachers result in lower effort and persistence (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Thus we assume that voluntary absenteeism may be a reflection of a sense of low capabilities to attain a desired level of performance.

Based on previous studies (Bem, 1970; Koslowsky, 2009; Leigh and Lust, 1988; Rokeach, 1973) positing that attitudes serve as one of the determinants of voluntary absenteeism, we propose that teachers who harbor a sense of low organizational justice, low organizational commitment, and low collective efficacy are also more likely to increase their work absence. Accordingly to Ajzen and Fishbein’s correspondence theory, this leads us to expect nothing more than weak relationships
between the general job attitudes and absenteeism behaviors. This leads to our second hypothesis:

**H2.** General attitude measures (organizational justice, organizational commitment, collective self-efficacy) will be unrelated or have weak negative relationships with voluntary absenteeism behaviors.

Following Ajzen and Fishbein (1977), Steers and Rhodes (1978) highlight the importance of seeing a specific attitude as influencing a specific behavior. Their theoretical process model of attendance proposed that a general job attitude (satisfaction with job situation) indirectly affects a job behavior (employee attendance) through a more specific intervening variable (attendance motivation). Together, the models proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) and Steers and Rhodes (1978) serve as the foundation for our development of a measure of “absenteeism acceptance,” in the anticipation that it will predict actual absenteeism behavior more accurately than other general job attitudes. This leads to our third hypothesis:

**H3.** “Absenteeism acceptance” predicts voluntary absenteeism better than existing general attitude measures (organizational justice, organizational commitment, collective self-efficacy).

**Method**

**Study sample**

Participants were 443 teachers (66 percent average response rate in each school) from 21 secondary schools belonging to one of the districts of the Ministry of Education in northern Israel. The average number of teachers in each school was 21.10 (SD = 5.54). The teachers included in the study were only those who had worked in the school more than one year so as to ensure that all respondents had had sufficient time to develop perceptions and attitudes about their schools. Women represented 66.4 percent of the sample. Participants’ average age was 42.12 years (SD = 8.42). Average teaching seniority was 12.18 years (SD = 9.25). The majority of teachers (71.6 percent) were tenured; the others were employed through temporary contracts. 69.0 percent of the teachers had a Bachelor’s degree, and 15.1 percent held a Master’s degree; the rest had non-academic degrees. These characteristics, roughly, represent the composition of the teacher population in the district under study, and in Israeli secondary schools in general (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

**Data collection**

After obtaining the approval of the Ministry of Education and the ethics committee in our university to distribute the questionnaires and to collect the absenteeism records from each school, letters explaining the objectives and methods of the study were sent to all inspectors in the district to encourage principals to allow their schools to participate in the study. The 21 schools included in the study were those whose principals agreed to cooperate.

Data collection was performed using a two-phase design. In the first phase, during their free time spent on school premises, the teachers answered anonymous questionnaires related to their attitudes (e.g. organizational justice, organizational commitment, and collective efficacy, absence acceptance) as they perceive them and their personal background. The questionnaire includes a cover page describing the
study goals and the researchers’ obligation to maintain anonymity according to the American Psychological Association (2002). This was a contributing factor in obtaining the teachers’ consent to participate and may explain the fact that the average response rate in each school was as high as 66 percent.

Each teacher put the questionnaire into an envelope, entered a code number on the envelope, and gave the envelope to the secretary of the participating school. In the second phase, which was conducted half a year later, every teacher put copies of their absence records (without identifying names), which were supplied by the school secretary, together with the original code, in an unmarked envelope and again gave the envelope to the school secretary. The codes helped the researchers link the questionnaires from the first phase to relevant data from the second phase.

Variables and measures
Voluntary absenteeism. Absenteeism was measured by school records of frequency of incidents of absences (number of absence incidents over six months) and by duration of absence (total number of absence days over six months). We omitted all teachers’ absenteeism caused by definitively involuntary absence reasons (i.e. maternity leave, mourning), and tested all other absenteeism records which might be considered voluntary (including sickness, because in Israel, in order to get pay for a day of absence, the teacher must supply a medical certificate or declaration of sickness).

It is generally believed that absenteeism frequency is the best measure of voluntary absenteeism, whereas absenteeism duration is the best reflection of involuntary absenteeism (Blau et al., 2004; Sagie, 1998). For example, consider a case where we have two teachers, both of them absent ten days in one academic year. However, the first one is absent in one event lasting ten consecutive days while the other teacher is absent in five events, two days in each event. In this case we assume that the absenteeism of the first teacher is involuntary, because we expect that a teacher would never choose to be absent for ten consecutive days in one event. Thus, if a teacher is absent for so many days in one event, it may be due to an involuntary reason (i.e. mourning period). However, we may consider the absenteeism of the second teacher as voluntary absenteeism, because a teacher may deliberately choose to be absent for short durations of time.

In any case, previous studies (e.g. Shapira-Lishchinsky and Even-Zohar, 2011; Koslowsky, 2009) indicate that sometimes it is difficult to classify a particular incident in the appropriate category (voluntary absenteeism/involuntary absenteeism). For example, how would we classify a teacher who is absent from school in order to go job-hunting after receiving a letter of dismissal for the following academic year? Thus, although we assume that attitudes may significantly affect measures of voluntary absenteeism more than they affect measures of involuntary absenteeism behaviors, the present study examines both absenteeism frequency and absenteeism duration measures. Support for our methodological approach may be provided by the relatively high correlation found between absence frequency and absence duration ($r = 0.714, p < 0.001$).

A six-month period of absence frequency reports was determined to be a reasonable time-span for which schools normally retain such records (Johns, 1994). In addition, a six-month time-span produces a valid picture of teacher absence, because it represents half of a work year (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2012; Shapira-Lishchinsky and Rosenblatt, 2010).

Assessment of the study measures
The key notion underlying factor analytic models is that some variables of theoretical interest cannot be observed directly; these unobserved variables are termed latent
variables (LV). Information related to them can be obtained indirectly by noting their effects on observed variables believed to represent them. The best known statistical procedure for investigating relations between sets of observed and LV is factor analysis. There are two basic types of factor analyses: exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and CFA. EFA is most appropriately used when links between the observed variables and their underlying factors are unknown or uncertain. One logical application of EFA would be in the development of a new assessment measure (Bryant and Yarnold, 1995). Therefore, in the present study we used EFA to develop the scale “absenteeism acceptance.”

In contrast, CFA is appropriately used when the researcher has some knowledge of the underlying LV structure. Based on empirical research, the researcher postulates relations between the observed measures and the underlying factors a priori and then tests this hypothesized structure statistically (Byrne, 2005). Therefore, in the present study, we assessed the general job attitudes (organizational commitment, organizational justice, collective efficacy) using CFA.

The correlations used for the input were estimated based on the pairwise available data to overcome the problem of missing data that could have led to biased conclusions drawn from the study data (Byrne, 2005).

**General job attitudes.** Organizational justice. This 21-item measure was based on Moorman (1991) and was translated into Hebrew by Rosenblatt and Hijazi (2004). Based on the theoretical background, two dominant types of justice (distributive and procedural) were selected. Distributive justice assessed the fairness of various school outcomes, including pay level, work schedule, and work load (seven items, $\alpha = 0.87$, 44 percent of explained variance). One sample item is: “Overall, the rewards I receive here are quite fair.” Procedural justice assessed the degree to which job decisions included mechanisms that ensured the acquisition of accurate and unbiased information, a voice for teachers in school matters, and an appeal process (six items, $\alpha = 0.92$). One sample item is: “My principal makes sure that all teachers’ concerns are heard before school decisions are made.” Response options ranged from $1 = $ strongly disagree to $5 = $ strongly agree.

Organizational commitment. This measure was based on Meyer and Allen’s (1997) original 22-item measure focussed on two dominant types of commitment (affective and normative) according the theoretical background. Affective commitment items (e.g. “I really feel as if this school’s problems are my own”) addressed the teachers’ perceptions of their reasons for wanting to remain in their school (eight items, $\alpha = 0.76$). Normative commitment items (One of the main reasons I continue to work in this school is that I believe loyalty is important) addressed the teachers’ perceptions of the reasons why they ought to remain in their school (five items, $\alpha = 0.70$). Response options ranged from $1 = $ strongly disagree to $5 = $ strongly agree.

Teachers’ sense of collective efficacy. This measure was based on Schechter and Tschannen-Moran (2006) who translated from English to Hebrew the Tschannen-Moran and Barr (2004) measurement, a 12-item measure that has two subscales: instructional strategies and student discipline. Instructional strategies (e.g. “How much can teachers in your school do to produce meaningful student learning?”) addressed the teachers’ perceptions of different tools available in schools to improve the quality of instruction (six items, $\alpha = 0.78$) and student discipline (e.g. “How much can school personnel in your school do to control disruptive behavior?”) addressed the teachers’ perceptions of tools available in schools to manage the classroom (six items, $\alpha = 0.88$). In the Israeli (Hebrew) version, the response set used a five-point response set with the same anchors as the English version (nothing, very little, some degree, quite a bit, a great deal at $1, 2, 3, 4, \text{ and } 5$, respectively).
To estimate the validity of the general job attitudes, we used CFA which belongs to a class of methodology known as structural equation modeling (Kline, 1998). Figure 1 illustrates the CFA model which is schematically portrayed as path diagrams.

For the purpose of this study, the three-factor model shown in Figure 1 was based on data representing item scores for the general job attitudes. A review of the related goodness-of-fit indexes revealed an exceptionally well-fitting model as indicated by the following: comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.994 (≥0.93; Hu and Bentler, 1999); standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.045 (<0.08; Hu and Bentler, 1999); root mean square error of approxidence (RMSEA) = 0.049 (<0.05; Browne and Cudeck, 1993). The overall $\chi^2$ value was 13.04, $p > 0.05$, with 6 df. In this study, all $\beta$'s were found relatively high and statistically significant.

Convergent and discriminant validity are frequently considered to be additional facets of construct validity (e.g. Bollen, 1989). Average variance extracted (AVE), a measure of the shared variance in a LV, was calculated (according to the Appendix) to check the LV's convergent and discriminant validity (DeVellis, 1991). In this study, CFA demonstrates: $\text{AVE}_{\text{organizational commitment}} = 0.70$; $\text{AVE}_{\text{organizational justice}} = 0.59$; $\text{AVE}_{\text{collective efficacy}} = 0.73$ which are adequate measures of convergent validity ($\text{AVE} \geq 0.5$; Nunnally, 1993). In addition, the correlations between the LV’s (organizational commitment, organizational justice, and collective efficacy) were found to be <0.7, and the squared correlations

**Notes:** Values above rectangles present percentage explained variance.

$\chi^2 = 13.040, df = 6, p = 0.062$; SRMR = 0.045; RMSEA = 0.049; NFI = 0.989; CFI = 0.994. ***p < 0.001
between two LV’s were less than either of their individual AVE’s, which are frequently accepted as evidence of discriminant validity (Bagozzi and Phillips, 1982).

Absenteeism acceptance. We based our questionnaire on Foust et al. (2006) who developed and validated a measure of an individual’s lateness attitude among 130 undergraduate students and 298 employees working at a university and health care facility. In this study we analyzed whether we can apply this measure to another type of withdrawal behavior, namely, “acceptance of absenteeism.” We based our analysis on the withdrawal behavior approach which includes both lateness and absenteeism behaviors (Koslowsky, 2009). Therefore, we posit that we may use this measure as a basis for developing a specific measure for “absenteeism acceptance.”

Content validity, construct definition, and items generation of “absenteeism acceptance”. Content validity is a non-statistical type of validity, referring to the extent to which a measure covers all facets of a given construct (American Educational Research Association, 1999). According to Foust et al. (2006), we may define “absenteeism acceptance” as how one feels and thinks about being absent from work, and this measure may include items that focus specifically on affective and cognitive reactions to absenteeism behavior. A measure has a content validity through careful selection of items reflecting the knowledge actually required for testing the measure. High content validity may be achieved through experts reviewing the test specifications and selecting the most representative items (Anastasi and Urbina, 1997). Therefore, the study items were formulated by both authors, one who has extensive training in educational administration, and the other who has extensive knowledge regarding absenteeism behavior literature and measurement development techniques.

There is strong theory and evidence supporting affective and cognitive components as separate aspects of attitude structures (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Therefore, we generated items according to this categorization scheme. Following Fabrigar et al. (1999) “lateness attitude” measure, items were generated to fully capture the content domain of what is included in the teacher’s attitude toward absenteeism at work. We focus on three content domains: first, an individual’s affective response to his own absenteeism from work (three items); second, an individual’s affective response to his co-workers’ absenteeism from work (three items); and finally, an individual’s beliefs or cognitions in general about work absenteeism (three items). Three items were reformulated for each content domain, reflecting various levels of intensity. We used some negative items because previous studies (e.g. Idaszak and Drasgow, 1987) argued that negatively worded items have the potential to minimize response bias.

Response scale development. It has been demonstrated (e.g. Lissitz and Green, 1975) that coefficient a reliability improves with the use of five Likert scales. Additionally, we chose to use response options ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree because we thought it would generate sufficient variance for statistical analyses.

Scale development results. Using factor analysis, we then examined the three-factor solution to identify which of the nine originally developed items should be used in the final absence attitude measure. Two specific criteria were used: loading > 0.70 on their respective dimension and cross-loading < 0.30 on the other dimensions (Hinkin, 1995). The items are presented in Table I.

Since teacher responses on the resulting nine items “absenteeism acceptance” measure yielded an internal consistency reliability of 0.58 for the third factor (general cognitions concerning absenteeism), and an internal consistency reliability of 0.623 for the entire measure “absenteeism attitude,” we decided to omit the third factor. Thus, the final measure of “absenteeism acceptance” that we used to test our study hypotheses
includes two dimensions. First, an individual’s affective response to his co-workers’ absenteeism from work. One sample item is: “My co-workers let me down when they are absent from work (three items, \( \alpha = 0.79 \), 23.84 percent of the explained variance). Second, an individual’s affective response to his own absenteeism from work. One sample item is: “I feel guilty when I am absent from school” (three items, \( \alpha = 0.73 \), 22.19 percent of the explained variance).

**Results**

*Hypotheses results regarding construct validity*

Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the “absenteeism acceptance” and other measures for the employee sample are reported in Table II.

**H1** argued that negative weak relationships will be found between “absenteeism acceptance” and general job attitudes such as organizational justice, organizational commitment, and collective efficacy. Based on examining bivariate correlations, we found, as we had hypothesized, weak negative relationships in most of the correlations between the general job attitudes and the newly developed “absenteeism acceptance” and its two dimensions.

More specifically, the general job attitudes correlated, respectively, to “absenteeism acceptance,” “affective response to own absence” and to “affective response to co-workers’ absence.” Specifically, affective commitment \( (r = -0.216, p < 0.001; r = -0.216, p < 0.001; \)
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<td>1</td>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>4.106</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>(0.76)</td>
<td>0.707***</td>
<td>0.436***</td>
<td>0.543***</td>
<td>0.327***</td>
<td>0.429***</td>
<td>-0.216***</td>
<td>-0.120*</td>
<td>-0.216***</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Normative commitment</td>
<td>3.992</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>(0.70)</td>
<td>0.442***</td>
<td>0.558***</td>
<td>0.334***</td>
<td>0.362***</td>
<td>-0.256***</td>
<td>-0.127**</td>
<td>-0.225***</td>
<td>-0.073</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
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<td>0.74</td>
<td>(0.87)</td>
<td>0.566***</td>
<td>0.299***</td>
<td>0.313***</td>
<td>-0.119*</td>
<td>-0.226**</td>
<td>-0.212***</td>
<td>-0.110*</td>
<td>-0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>3.834</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.92)</td>
<td>0.385***</td>
<td>0.464***</td>
<td>-0.234**</td>
<td>-0.150***</td>
<td>-0.228***</td>
<td>-0.166***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Collective efficacy (IS)</td>
<td>4.070</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.78)</td>
<td>0.713***</td>
<td>-0.151**</td>
<td>-0.064</td>
<td>-0.126**</td>
<td>-0.124*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Collective efficacy (SD)</td>
<td>4.023</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.88)</td>
<td>-0.079</td>
<td>-0.083</td>
<td>-0.098*</td>
<td>-0.110*</td>
<td>-0.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Affective reaction to own absenteeism</td>
<td>3.033</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.73)</td>
<td>0.363***</td>
<td>0.796***</td>
<td>0.265***</td>
<td>0.298***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism</td>
<td>2.022</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.79)</td>
<td>0.8526***</td>
<td>0.231**</td>
<td>0.263***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Absenteeism acceptance</td>
<td>2.5263</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(0.76)</td>
<td>0.264***</td>
<td>0.288***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Absenteeism frequency</td>
<td>2.264</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.714***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Absenteeism duration</td>
<td>3.915</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: $n = 443$. Internal consistency reliability estimates ($\alpha$'s) are presented in parentheses along the diagonal. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$; ***$p < 0.001$
Hypotheses results regarding “criterion validity” and “predictive validity”

H2, which argued that general attitude measures will be unrelated or have weak negative relationships with voluntary absenteeism behaviors, was supported. Based on previous studies, indicating that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between voluntary absenteeism and involuntary absenteeism (Koslowsky, 2009), we examined this hypothesis with regard both to absenteeism frequency and to absenteeism duration measures.

Procedural justice was weakly related to absenteeism frequency (voluntary absenteeism) \( (r = -0.166, p < 0.001) \), slightly higher than the weak relationship that was found between procedural justice and absenteeism duration \( (r = -0.158, p < 0.01) \), while distributive justice was found weakly related only to absenteeism frequency \( (r = -0.110, p < 0.05) \) and to absenteeism duration. Affective commitment was not found related either to absenteeism frequency or to absenteeism duration, while normative commitment was found weakly negatively related to absenteeism duration \( (r = -0.106, p < 0.05) \). Both dimensions of collective efficacy (instructional strategies, student discipline) were found significantly and negatively related to absenteeism frequency \( (r = -0.124, p < 0.05; r = -0.110, p < 0.05 \text{ correspondingly}) \) and not to absenteeism duration. In general, with regard to \( H2 \), we find that more general job attitudes were found related to absenteeism frequency than to absenteeism duration.

\( H3 \) argued that “absenteeism acceptance” predicts voluntary absenteeism better than other general attitude measures (organizational justice, organizational commitment collective self-efficacy). We found, that in the majority of the cases examined, our hypothesis was supported. Relationships were found to be relatively stronger between the new measure “absenteeism acceptance” and its two dimensions and absenteeism measures (frequency and duration) than between the general job attitudes and absenteeism behavior. “Absenteeism acceptance,” “affective reaction to own absenteeism,” and “affective reaction to co-workers’ absenteeism” emerged as significant predictors of absenteeism frequency, respectively \( (r = 0.264, p < 0.001; r = 0.265, p < 0.001; r = 0.231, p < 0.01) \) and absenteeism duration, respectively \( (r = 0.288, p < 0.001; r = 0.298, p < 0.001; r = 0.263, p < 0.01) \).

However, most of the other general job attitudes were found to have a relatively low relationship to both absenteeism frequency and absenteeism duration as compared with the “absenteeism acceptance” and its two dimensions. For example, the relationship between distributive justice and absenteeism frequency \( (r = -0.110, p < 0.05) \), the relationship between normative commitment and absenteeism duration \( (r = -0.106, p < 0.05) \), the relationship between instructional strategies and absence frequency \( (r = -0.124, p < 0.05) \), the relationship between student discipline and absence frequency \( (r = -0.110, p < 0.05) \), the relationship between procedural justice and absence frequency \( (r = -0.166, p < 0.001) \), and the relationship between procedural justice and absence duration \( (r = -0.158, p < 0.001) \).
Furthermore, regarding $H_3$, we employed the GLIMMIX procedure of SAS for this analysis (SAS, 2008), in order to determine whether the different dimensions of “absenteeism acceptance” improved the prediction of future absenteeism behavior above and beyond the dimensions of other general job attitudes (organizational commitment, organizational justice, and collective efficacy). The GLIMMIX procedure fits statistical models where the dependent variable is not necessarily normally distributed. Because absence is characterized by a Poisson distribution, quasi-Poisson regression models were found to be best suited to assess the relationship between the dependent variables (absence frequency, absence duration), and the explanatory variables (organizational commitment, organizational justice, collective self-efficacy, absenteeism acceptance).

The quasi-Poisson regression rather than the Poisson with scale $= 1$ was preferred, since over-dispersion was indicated in the data. Consistent with our approach toward testing our hypotheses with the two different measures of absenteeism, analyses were carried out using absenteeism frequency and absenteeism duration as dependent variables in two separate regressions.

We tested three competitive models. The first model (Table III) included only the general job attitudes. The second model (Table IV) included the two dimensions of the developed measurement “affective reaction to own absenteeism” and “affective reaction to co-worker’s absenteeism.” The third model (Table V) included the integrative developed measurement (average of “affective reaction to own absenteeism” and “affective reaction to co-worker’s absenteeism”).

Akaike information criterion (AIC), the relative goodness-of-fit measure, was used to compare among the different models. Based on the criterion of the procedure of SAS, that the preferred model is the one with the lower value of AIC (SAS, 2008), we found that the third model which focuses on the integrative measure “absenteeism acceptance” was preferred. All other similar fit measures (AICC, BIC, CAIC, HQIC) indicate the same results.

More specifically, we found in model 1 (Table III) that only affective commitment was found related to absence frequency (and not to absence duration) ($\beta = -0.246$, $p < 0.05$), and procedural justice was found related to both absence frequency and absence duration, respectively ($\beta = -0.212$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = -0.206$, $p < 0.001$), while AIC was the highest both for absenteeism frequency as compared to the other two competitive models (AIC = 2,451.01) and to absenteeism duration (AIC = 1,526.55).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables entered</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Dependent variable</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Absenteeism frequency ($\beta$)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Absenteeism duration ($\beta$)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.195</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>1.165</td>
<td>0.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>$-0.246^*$</td>
<td>0.123</td>
<td>0.1165</td>
<td>0.101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative commitment</td>
<td>$-0.069$</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>$-0.1193$</td>
<td>0.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>$-0.051$</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.0536</td>
<td>0.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>$-0.212^{**}$</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>$-0.206^{**}$</td>
<td>0.0682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective efficacy (IS)</td>
<td>$-0.128$</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>$-0.0311$</td>
<td>0.0857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective efficacy (SD)</td>
<td>$-0.0152$</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.0913</td>
<td>0.0946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student discipline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: AIC (absenteeism frequency) = 2,451.01. AIC (absenteeism duration) = 1,526.55. $^*p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$.

Model 1: relationship of general job attitudes to absenteeism measures (Quasi-Poisson regression models, GLIMMIX analysis)
Model 2 (Table IV) was found better than model 1 (with smaller AIC value than model 1) for both absenteeism frequency (AIC = 24,161.21) and absenteeism duration (AIC = 1,507.93). In this model we found that in addition to the relationship between affective commitment and absentee frequency ($\beta = -0.165, p < 0.05$), between procedural justice and absentee frequency ($\beta = -0.185, p < 0.05$) and between procedural justice and absence duration ($\beta = -0.180, p < 0.01$) — “affective reaction to own absenteeism” emerged as a significant predictor for both dependent variables: absenteeism frequency ($\beta = 0.260, p < 0.05$) and absenteeism duration ($\beta = 0.244, p < 0.01$), while other general job attitudes were not found to be related either to absenteeism frequency or to absenteeism duration. “Affective reaction to co-worker’s absenteeism” was not found related to both dimensions of absenteeism measures (frequency, duration).

Table V presents model 3, the aggregation of the two dimensions: “affective reaction to own absenteeism” and “affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism” as one independent variable entered:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent variables entered</th>
<th>Absenteeism frequency ($\beta$)</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Absenteeism duration ($\beta$)</th>
<th>SE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.3239</td>
<td>0.447</td>
<td>0.3245</td>
<td>0.3753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective commitment</td>
<td>$-0.1655*$</td>
<td>0.122</td>
<td>0.1333</td>
<td>0.0883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative commitment</td>
<td>$-0.0514$</td>
<td>0.106</td>
<td>$-0.1008$</td>
<td>0.1006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributive justice</td>
<td>$-0.0433$</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>0.0652</td>
<td>0.0686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural justice</td>
<td>$-0.1855*$</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>$-0.1802**$</td>
<td>0.0675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective efficacy (IS)</td>
<td>$-0.1145$</td>
<td>0.102</td>
<td>$-0.0257$</td>
<td>0.0845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective efficacy (SD)</td>
<td>$-0.0368$</td>
<td>0.113</td>
<td>0.0785</td>
<td>0.0934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective reaction to own absenteeism</td>
<td>$0.260*$</td>
<td>0.067</td>
<td>0.2440**</td>
<td>0.0558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism</td>
<td>$0.08222$</td>
<td>0.061</td>
<td>0.0947</td>
<td>0.0495</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: AIC (absenteeism frequency) = 2,416.21. AIC (absenteeism duration) = 1,507.93. *$p < 0.05$; **$p < 0.01$
dimension: “absenteeism acceptance.” We aggregate the two dimensions of “absenteeism acceptance” into one dimension in order to find whether we should omit the dimension of “affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism” from our suggested absenteeism attitude predictor (based on the findings in Table IV, where “affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism” was not found related to both dimensions of absenteeism measures). We find that model 3 was the best model proposed with a smaller AIC value as compared to model 1 and model 2 (absenteeism frequency: $AIC = 2,409.96$; absenteeism duration: $AIC = 1,505.68$). Thus, in general, $H3$ was partially confirmed.

These findings, in addition to the findings in Table II, namely: satisfactory internal consistency reliability ($\alpha = 0.76$); the relatively satisfactory correlation between “affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism” and “affective reaction to own absenteeism” ($r = 0.363, p < 0.01$), and the significant correlations that were found between “affective reaction to co-worker absenteeism” and the two dimensions of absenteeism measures ($r = 0.231, p < 0.01; r = 0.263, p < 0.001$) – support our decision to use the two dimensions of “absenteeism acceptance” as an aggregate predictor and to prefer this specific predictor of voluntary absenteeism.

Finally, we may explain the findings, that some of the relationships which were found significant in Table II were not found significant in the regression analyses (Tables III-V), by the relatively high correlation (due to multicollinearity) between the different predictors.

Discussion
The main goal of this study was to develop an accurate measure for predicting voluntary absenteeism among teachers, because as far as we know, no satisfactory validated measure has been developed to date. The importance of such a tool lies in its ability to help understand, predict, and potentially reduce the high costs of absenteeism behavior. We included this specific measure in the “attitude-behavior sequence” suggested in Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1977) model for predicting actual absenteeism and compare its predictive validity with other general attitude measures that have been used in the literature.

We found clear evidence for the reliability and validity of this specific measure. First, this measure was demonstrated to be psychometrically strong, with satisfactory reliability ($\alpha = 0.76$). Second, considering that reliability is necessary but not sufficient for validity (Cortina, 1993), all of our hypotheses were either supported or partially supported, demonstrating the validity of the measurement.

In addition to the internal and the convergent validly that we found for the general job attitudes based on AVE measure, our findings also confirm the construct validity of the new measure “absenteeism acceptance.” As expected, we found in most of the correlations weak negative relationships between the general job attitudes and “absenteeism acceptance.” This demonstrates the convergent validity and the discriminant validity of the new measure, showing it is not simply a duplicate of any of these general job attitudes.

More specifically, we found that slightly more general job attitudes were related to “affective reaction to own absenteeism” (one of the dimensions of “absenteeism acceptance”) than to “affective reaction to co-workers” absenteeism (the other dimension of “absenteeism acceptance”). Moreover, we found that the relationships were relatively stronger between the general job attitudes and “affective reaction to own absence” than between general job attitudes and “affective reaction to co-workers’ absence.” These findings may explained by the fact that different job attitudes may
reflect intrinsic motivation factors ("I" as a reference point of view) more than extrinsic motivation factors ("colleagues" as a reference point of view).

According to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theory (Deci, 1975), we may distinguish between the different dimensions of “absenteeism acceptance.” Extrinsic motivation originates outside of the individual and focusses on the short term. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that exists within the individual and is not reliant on any external pressure. Research on intrinsic motivation has focussed on the long term and directed attention to process aspects (Covington and Mueller, 2001; Deci et al., 1999).

The definition of work withdrawal construct presents motivational factors such as the following definition: “behaviors dissatisfied individuals use to avoid aspects of their specific work role or minimize the time spent on their specific work tasks while maintaining their current organizational and work-role memberships” (Hanisch and Hulin, 1991, p. 111), which may include physical removal from a particular workplace, either for part of a day (voluntary lateness), an entire day (voluntary absenteeism), or permanently (voluntary turnover) (Blau, 1998; Blau et al., 2004; Johns, 2001).

The most common model of the internal structure of withdrawal behaviors, posits that withdrawal manifestations occur in progression, starting with relatively mild forms of psychological withdrawal such as occasional lateness and advancing to more severe forms such as absence or even turnover (Johns, 2001; Koslowsky, 2009). Previous studies strongly appear to support the progression of the withdrawal model. Longitudinal studies by Clegg (1983), Wolpin et al. (1988), and Rosse (1988) found a lateness-absence progression. Several studies reveal a progression from absence to turnover (Farrell and Peterson, 1984; Kanfer et al., 1988; Krausz et al., 1988; Rosse, 1988). In fact, previous meta-analytics showed that the two adjacent relationships in the progression model (e.g. lateness-absenteeism, absenteeism-turnover) were stronger than the nonadjacent relationship between lateness and turnover (Koslowsky et al., 1997; Mitra et al., 1992).

Therefore, we may anticipate that “absenteeism acceptance” which presents an attitude toward severe withdrawal behavior such as absenteeism will be affected by internal factors which relate to the long term, such as organizational commitment, organizational justice, and collective self-efficacy.

The contention that absenteeism frequency is the best measurement of voluntary absenteeism seems to be mildly supported by the study results which indicate that slightly more general job attitudes were related to absenteeism frequency than to absenteeism duration. However, few job attitudes (e.g. procedural justice, normative commitment) were found to be related to absenteeism duration which, according to the literature, is a truer reflection of involuntary absenteeism and logically, should not be affected by attitude. These findings may be explained by the fact that although a model of “attitude-behavior sequence” seems to be most appropriate for predicting voluntary absenteeism (e.g. Benson and Pond, 1987; Hom and Griffeth, 1995), it is often difficult to classify a particular incident in the appropriate category. Moreover, a change in the parameter used for measuring absenteeism (duration or frequency) is not enough to consider whether the absenteeism is voluntary or involuntary. Support for this argument may be found by the satisfactory correlation that was found in this study between absenteeism duration and absenteeism frequency.

In addition to the confirmation of the construct validity of “acceptance absenteeism” measure, our study findings also confirm the criterion validity and the predictive validity of the new measure of “acceptance absenteeism.” Testing both absenteeism
frequency and absenteeism duration, we found that “absenteeism acceptance” measure predicts absenteeism behavior above and beyond that predicted by the general job attitudes. These findings may reinforce Ajzen and Fishbein’s (1977) attitude-behavior approach, since accurate predictors relate higher to voluntary absenteeism than do other non-specific predictors, with a potential contribution in the future to reducing voluntary absenteeism in schools.

**Strength, limitation, and future research**

The strength of the study design is in its content, construct, criterion, and predictive validity of the new measure “absenteeism acceptance,” reflecting a specific and accurate measurement to predict absenteeism behavior. Methodologically, this study was based on teachers’ self-reports, school records, and use of separate time intervals which are more informative as regards causal sequences. However, there are some limitations to the study. First, the sample was drawn from one district in Israel. This is a limited sample which may classify our study as exploratory. Thus, the findings should be tested and validated as to whether they can be applicable to other districts in Israel. In addition, one must consider the generalizability of research based on a framework developed in one nation and whether it will prove valid in other countries.

Second, the sample used in the present study included only teachers, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other sectors of business and industry. In view of the growing awareness and knowledge of the importance of reducing employees’ voluntary absenteeism, future research should attempt to replicate the framework of this study and apply it to other occupational groups in the public and private sectors, to permit generalization to a wider segment of the workforce.

Finally, despite the prevalent approach which maintains that absenteeism frequency is the best measure of voluntary absenteeism and absenteeism duration is the best measure of involuntary absenteeism, our findings indicate that this distinction is not decisive, because of the problem of defining voluntary absenteeism. Future studies should investigate whether we can develop other, more precise predictors and measures in order to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary absenteeism.

**Conclusion**

This study develops and expands upon previous research by creating and validating a specific “absenteeism acceptance” measure that seems to be useful in understanding and predicting voluntary absenteeism. In the past, research has attempted to identify predictors of absenteeism behavior by focusing chiefly on general job attitudes and has come up with inconsistent results. We developed a measure involving a specific attitude toward absenteeism and found that “absenteeism acceptance” behaves differently than general job attitudes. The study findings clearly indicate “absenteeism acceptance” as a reliable and valid predictor of costly absenteeism behavior. Moreover, this study may contribute to expanding the Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) model as it concerns the “attitude-behavior sequence” by adding a specific “absenteeism acceptance” measure, an approach not tested previously. We encourage schools and principals to use this simple, reliable, six-item measure as an indicator of teachers’ attitudes toward absenteeism and to predict voluntary absenteeism. It appears to be a psychometrically sound measure that can be used in future absenteeism research, in theory as well as practice.
References


Bem, D.J. (1970), Beliefs, Attitudes, and Human Affairs, Brooks-Cole, Belmont, CA.


Further reading


Appendix

The AVE calculation (Fornell and Larker, 1981).

The AVE for $X$ with indicators $x_1, x_2, \ldots, x_n$ is:

$$AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2 \text{Var}(X)}{\frac{\sum \lambda_i^2 \text{Var}(X) + \sum \text{Var}(e_i)}}$$

where $\lambda_i$ is the loading of $x_i$ on $X$; Var is the variance; $e_i$ is the measurement error of $x_i$. 
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