



Israeli male versus female teachers' intent to leave work

Teachers' intent
to leave work

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to identify the factors that may reduce teachers' intent to leave. The paper examines differences between Israeli male and female teachers in their perceived organizational justice, perceived organizational commitment, and intent to leave work.

Design/methodology/approach – Participants are 1,016 school teachers from 35 high schools in Israel. Series of mixed-model regression analyses are used to test for mediated relationships.

Findings – Multilevel analysis reveals that among female teachers, organizational commitment (affective and normative) fully mediated the relationship between intent to leave and distributive justice (fairness regarding employee outcomes), whereas among male teachers this relationship is only partially mediated. The negative relationship between intent to leave and procedural justice (fairness regarding procedures) is higher among females than among males.

Research limitations/implications – Although some precautions are used, the self-reported measures may likely reflect same-source bias, calling for further safeguards in future studies.

Practical implications – Schools should become aware of differences between male and female teachers' perceptions and should build an equitable school climate that considers fair rewards, opportunities, and programs to increase teachers' commitment and reduce their intent to leave.

Originality/value – This paper sheds light on the possible reasons for male and female teachers' turnover intentions through examining teachers' justice perceptions and their work commitment.

Keywords Teachers, Gender, Job satisfaction, Employee behaviour, Schools, Israel

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Intent to leave work, as a predictor of voluntary turnover (Lambert and Hogan, 2009), is a key concern for securing and maintaining qualified workforces in educational systems (Smylie and Miretzky, 2004). The importance of studying teachers' intentions to leave their jobs cannot be overstated. Teachers who intend to leave their school may reduce their efforts at work. Often those who consider leaving are the more qualified teachers, which may jeopardize schools' teaching standards and affect colleagues' motivation and efforts (Rosenblatt and Shirom, 2006).

The current study on intent to leave work focused on differences between male and female teachers, who have previously been shown to hold different perceptions regarding their organizations (Costa *et al.*, 2001; Feingold, 1994; Nelson, 2005; Russ and McNeilly, 1995). Although male-female differences were suggested as predicting employees' intent to leave, prior research revealed inconsistent findings (Al-Omari *et al.*, 2008; Barrick and Zimmerman, 2005).

Some researchers found no significant differences between males' and females' intent to leave work (Nelson, 2005; Weisberg and Kirschenbaum, 1993); others reported that males intend to leave more than females (Lachman and Diamant, 1987;



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Russ and McNeilly, 1995; Tsui *et al.*, 1992); and others showed that females intend to leave more than males (Foley *et al.*, 2005; Lambert and Hogan, 2009; Lilly *et al.*, 2006; Tipton, 2002). Further investigation of differential causes for male and female teachers' intent to leave their school could help educational systems implement necessary changes to prevent turnover of valuable educators.

To shed light on the possible reasons for male and female teachers' turnover intentions, this study attempted to develop a theoretical framework examining perceptions and attitudes that were previously linked to the intent-to-leave variable: organizational justice and organizational commitment. Such ethical values and perceptions are particularly relevant considering that teachers are expected to act as moral agents and role models in the school environment, thus educating their students for ethical values and principles (Begley and Stefkovich, 2007; Carr, 2005; Colnerud, 2006; Husu and Tirri, 2007).

The following section describes the theoretical literature underlying male-female differences in teachers' intent to leave, organizational justice, and organizational commitment, presenting the mixed findings of previous studies and the current study hypotheses and design.

1.1 Theoretical background

Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model, which focuses on values and perceptions, may further understanding of why teachers intend to leave schools. Individuals' level of attraction to a particular organization is determined by their assessment of the congruence between their own and their organization's goals, perceptions, and values. Selection relates to an organization's ability to select those individuals who offer a good fit with its values, perceptions, and other attributes. Attrition occurs when individuals leave an organization where they do not fit (Al-Omari *et al.*, 2008; Schneider *et al.*, 1995). Therefore, the present study investigated whether teachers' ethical perceptions and attitudes (organizational justice and organizational commitment) concerning their schools relate to their intent to leave. Each of these constructs will be discussed next.

1.1.1 Male-female differences in the intent to leave work. Research on societal norms for perceptions of sexual roles clearly shows that females and males are expected to perform some tasks differently (Huang *et al.*, 2004; Lewis *et al.*, 2003; Lilly *et al.*, 2006; Wayne *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, males and females may be expected to demonstrated differences in their intent to leave work. One main theoretical explanation suggests that because females are expected to handle more responsibility for family issues than males, females tend to perceive their careers differently to reduce work-family conflict, for example by ignoring unjust work situations like lower promotion opportunities or salaries. As a result, their intent to leave is lower than males' (Batt and Valcour, 2003; Greenhaus *et al.*, 2001; Williams, 2000).

This difference in career perceptions may be even more pronounced in the teaching profession, which many females choose primarily because its working conditions (e.g. working hours and holidays that match their children's schedules) suit traditional female roles (Cushman, 2005). By contrast, males may choose the teaching profession as a means of social mobility (Ladebo, 2005), therefore increasing males' intent to leave work.

Another explanation for females' lower attrition tendencies derives from the similarity-attraction theory, which suggests that individuals are attracted to and prefer

to interact with similar others (Kim *et al.*, 1996). Thus, females working with other females may be more satisfied and committed to their jobs (Elvira and Cohen, 2001). Based on this theory and on evidence that female teachers predominate over males in the school systems, female teachers may be less likely to leave their schools. Indeed, female teachers constitute 66.8 percent of the teaching force in Israeli high schools (Israel Bureau of Statistics, 2008) and 51.9 percent internationally (OECD, 2006).

These arguments led to the first hypothesis:

H1. In Israel, male teachers will demonstrate a higher level of intention to leave school than will female teachers.

1.1.2 Male-female differences in perceived organizational justice as related to intent to leave. Organizational justice refers to the role of fairness toward employees in the workplace (Greenberg, 1995). The concept of justice is critical for understanding organizational processes and interpersonal relationships. Research has focused on two sub-domains:

- (1) distributive justice, relating to fairness of outcomes affecting employees; and
- (2) procedural justice, describing fairness of procedures used to determine those outcomes (Pillai *et al.*, 2001).

Prior research indicated that when workers perceive the justice or fairness of their organizations to be low or unsatisfying, they exhibit reduced work commitment and higher intent to leave (Elvira and Cohn, 2001; Fields *et al.*, 2000; Kwon, 2006; Sumner and Niederman, 2004). However, previous studies on male-female differences in perceived organizational justice showed mixed results. For example, one study recently reported no significant differences between males and females in their organizational justice perceptions (Yilmaz and Tasdan, 2009), whereas another study among Protestant clergy in Hong Kong did find such differences (Foley *et al.*, 2005).

Several mechanisms may explain male-female differences in perceptions of organizational justice and intent to leave: interpersonal orientation, intrinsic/extrinsic rewards, and reward values. Interpersonal orientation (Foley *et al.*, 2005; Senecal *et al.*, 2001) refers to male-female differences in socialization, which result in females' greater orientation toward relationships' interpersonal aspects and males' greater concern with task and status differences (Batt and Valcour, 2003; Lilly *et al.*, 2006). These orientation differences may influence the extent to which male and female employees cite distributive versus procedural injustice as reasons for intending to leave their workplace. Namely, males are more likely to cite distributive injustice as a rationale for considering leaving work, because the outcome of pay decisions often relates to the ability to maintain status differences. Likewise, females are more likely to cite procedural injustice as a rationale for their intent to leave, because procedures often relate to the ability to maintain harmonious interpersonal relationships.

The second mechanism, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, may also differently affect turnover intentions among female and male teachers (Hewlett and Luce, 2005). The culturally defined role of the male as the main financial provider may increase male teachers' need for extrinsic rewards (e.g. satisfactory salary or work conditions). Thus, male teachers' perceptions of low extrinsic rewards may reduce their perception of distributive justice (reward versus investment), resulting in higher intent to leave than among females.

In contrast, female teachers are often defined as secondary providers, which may decrease their need for extrinsic rewards (Ngo *et al.*, 2003) and enable more satisfaction from intrinsic rewards (e.g. self-actualization and recognition), especially in the education field where salaries are typically low (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). These findings suggest that females may focus more on procedural justice that would ensure fair processes, and may therefore intend to leave less often than males.

Both these mechanisms led to the following two-part hypothesis:

H2a. The negative relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave will be higher among males than females.

H2b. The negative relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave will be higher among females than males.

1.1.2.1 Male-female differences in organizational justice as related to intent to leave in the Israeli educational context. Reward values are a third mechanism that may explain male-female differences in perceptions of organizational justice and intent to leave, especially in the Israeli educational context (Tata, 2000). Males may place a higher value on pay as a reward because it symbolizes how their work is valued. By contrast, females may value money less because they learn that tasks usually performed by females are not rewarded monetarily (Lewis *et al.*, 2003). Differences in pay between males and females have often been justified by the claim that females are usually not the family's main economic provider (Huang *et al.*, 2004).

The *Global Gender Gap Report* (Hausmann *et al.*, 2008) recently examined critical areas of inequality between males and females (e.g. resources, opportunities, and economic participation) in 130 economies around the globe, thus mapping Israel with respect to other countries. The three highest ranking countries – Sweden, Norway, and Finland – have closed a little over 80 percent of their gender gaps, whereas Israel, the USA, and Portugal have closed only a little over 70 percent of their gender gaps.

The Israeli school system is a case in point for the continued existence of such gaps. In 2005, the average monthly wage in education was 4,866 New Israel Shekels (NIS) for females (roughly \$1,217) and NIS 8,062 (roughly \$2,015) for males. In other words, female educators earned about 60 percent of their male counterparts' salary (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005). This unequal input-outcome ratio can lead females to perceive distributive unfairness and increase their inclination to leave.

The main reason for large male-female salary gaps lies in the distribution of administrative positions. Although females constitute the majority of the teaching force, only 36 percent of Israeli school principals are female. Other administrative positions (class and subject-area coordinators) are also predominated by males. The large number of males in senior educational positions can explain the social expectation that females should demand fewer senior positions and less pay than males (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005).

These characteristics of the Israeli educational system suggest that distributive injustice may act as a discriminating factor against female teachers, possibly affecting females more adversely than males (Foley *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, females may have fewer opportunities to use skills that can help them obtain better-paying jobs outside the educational system, perpetuating their inferior occupational status (Swirski *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, male-female discrepancies in pay and promotion opportunities also exist in other occupations. Therefore, female teachers may accept their

workplace's distributive injustice as a given (Ngo *et al.*, 2003) and may not react as extremely as males by intending to leave.

These arguments led to this hypothesis:

H3. In cases of perceived low distributive justice, male teachers will intend to leave school more than female teachers.

1.1.3 Organizational commitment as mediating organizational justice and intent to leave. *H1-H3* represent the direct relations between organizational justice and intent to leave regarding male-female differences. The present study proposed a more complex model of this relationship. Given that organizational commitment was found to mediate the relationship between ethical perceptions and employee withdrawal behaviors such as lateness, absenteeism, and turnover (Kwon, 2006; Sumner and Niederman, 2004), the present study examined whether organizational commitment mediated the relationship between organizational justice and intent to leave in males and females. Organizational commitment was selected as a mediator variable because prior studies observed that organizational justice helps predict organizational commitment, which, in turn, may reduce employees' intent to leave (Cunningham and Sages, 2003; Kwon, 2006; Lambert and Hogan, 2009; Sumner and Niederman, 2004).

Organizational commitment has three components: affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer and Allen, 1997). Affective commitment refers to teachers' emotional attachment to the organization, identification with it, and involvement in it. Teachers with strong affective commitment continue in an organization because they want to do so. Normative commitment reflects feelings of obligation to continue employment, because one ought to remain with the organization. Finally, teachers whose primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because of their awareness of the costs associated with leaving, i.e. because they need to stay.

Previous studies indicated that affective and normative commitments dominate more than continuance commitment in relationships with withdrawal behaviors (Meyer *et al.*, 1993, 2002). Therefore, this study focused only on affective and normative commitment.

1.1.3.1 Male-female differences in organizational commitment and intent to leave. Mixed results were reported on males' versus females' perceived organizational commitment. Some studies suggested that male and female employees may differ in their sense of commitment to work (Foley *et al.*, 2005; Porter, 2001; Scandura and Lankau, 1997), whereas other studies demonstrated no such significant differences (Al-Ajmi, 2006; Porter, 2001; Velde *et al.*, 2003; Xiong and Francesco, 2000).

Females in the teaching profession may be able to cope more easily with the work-family conflict than other female employees because of the flexible hours and short workday (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2001). Moreover, as mentioned above, female teachers may focus more on intrinsic than extrinsic rewards (Batt and Valcour, 2003). Thus, it can be assumed that female teachers will be more committed to school than male teachers and that for female teachers the relationship between organizational justice (procedural/distributive) and intent to leave will be mediated by organizational commitment (affective/normative).

1.1.3.2 The mediating model in the Israeli educational context. As noted, Israeli female teachers tend to experience injustice more than male teachers, and their choices outside school are limited (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2005; Oplatka, 2006;

Swirski *et al.*, 2001). Accordingly, they will likely show more sensitivity to unjust events than male teachers. Thus, when female teachers perceive less injustice in school, they will likely demonstrate more commitment and lower inclination to leave compared with male teachers.

Hence, the final hypothesis was:

- H4. Among female teachers, organizational commitment (affective/normative) will fully mediate the relationship between organizational justice (procedural/distributive) and intent to leave, whereas among male teachers these relationships may be partially mediated.

2. Method

2.1 Sample and data collection

The present study was part of a larger research project on teacher withdrawal syndrome and school ethics in Israel. Participants in the current study were 1,016 teachers from 35 high schools, representing about 67 percent of the largest high school network in Israel (52 schools). High school in Israel is a three-year period spanning Grades 10-12. Although only tenth grade is mandatory, most Israeli students attend all three years. High school prepares students for national matriculation examinations, which are mandatory for admission to institutions of higher education and are required for most jobs.

The sample comprised 68 percent females and 32 percent males. Participants' average age was 43.19 years ($SD = 9.42$). Average school tenure was 12.60 years ($SD = 8.48$), and average job tenure was 17.90 years ($SD = 9.39$); 86.1 percent of the teachers had tenure and the others were employed through temporary contracts. There were no significant differences in any of these variables between males and females. Participants taught various subjects covering a range of academic disciplines for the matriculation exams (e.g. Hebrew, English, Mathematics, Bible, History, Science, Art, and Literature).

Letters explaining the study's objectives and methods were sent to all 52 schools. Thirty-five principals agreed to participate, with an average of 54.74 teachers ($SD = 25.54$) and 20.11 classes ($SD = 9.30$) per school. Teachers in each school interacted regularly with each other during recess and at faculty meetings (held at least once a month), justifying a multilevel approach (teachers nested within schools). The sample included all teachers who had worked at their jobs for more than one year, so that respondents had time to develop attitudes toward their schools. Of a total of 1,500 questionnaires distributed by research assistants to teachers during breaks in all 35 schools, 1,016 were returned, a response rate of 67.7 percent. Teachers completed the questionnaires voluntarily.

To overcome problems associated with self-report (social desirability bias; memory problems), the teachers' self-reported absences from school over the past half a year (another withdrawal variable, beyond the scope of the present study) were compared with the school network's formal records of teacher absence. Average days of absence showed no significant differences between the two data sources, $M_{\text{self-report}} = 11.91$ days, $SE = 4.30$; $M_{\text{school record}} = 12.28$ days, $SE = 5.54$; Wilcoxon test, $Z = -2.955$, $p = 0.695$. A correlation test yielded $r_p = 0.52$, $p = 0.002$. These findings indicate that the current self-report data may be used reliably to test the other study variables.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Intent to leave. The five-item measure for assessing intent to leave was adopted from Walsh *et al.* (1985). Participants rated items like "I often think about quitting my school" from one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). Scale reliability was $a = 0.92$ in the present study and $a = 0.90$ in Rosenblatt and Inbal (1999), who used this scale in studies of Israeli teachers.

2.2.2 Organizational justice. This 21-item measure was based on Moorman (1991) and translated into Hebrew by Rosenblatt and Hijazi (2004). Factor analysis (principal components and varimax rotation) yielded three factors. The first two, representing the dominant types of justice (distributive and procedural), were selected for the present study. Distributive justice items (e.g. "I am fairly paid or rewarded considering my job responsibilities") assessed perceived fairness of various school outcomes, including pay level, work schedule, and work load (five items, $a = 0.87$, 20.33 percent of explained variance).

Procedural justice items (e.g. "My principal asks for clarifications and additional information before making decisions") assessed perception of job decisions as including mechanisms ensuring the acquisition of accurate and unbiased information, a voice for teachers in school matters, and an appeals process (12 items, $a = 0.94$, 37.08 percent of explained variance). Interactional justice, measuring teachers' feeling that their needs were being considered, was included in the procedural justice dimension by the factorial structure. It seems that Israeli teachers do not distinguish between procedural and interactional justice. Response options for all items ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

2.2.3 Organizational commitment. Factor analysis (principal components, varimax rotation) based on Meyer and Allen's (1997) original 22-item measure yielded six factors. The first two, representing the dominant types of commitment (affective and normative), were selected for the present study. Affective commitment items (e.g. "I really feel as if this school's problems are my own") addressed teachers' perceptions of their reasons for wanting to remain in their school (seven items, $a = 0.88$, 21.54 percent of explained variance). Normative commitment items ("One of the major reasons I continue to teach in this school is that I believe loyalty is important") addressed teachers' perceptions of the reasons for which they ought to remain in their school (six items, $a = 0.83$, 13.65 percent of explained variance). Response options for all items ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

In all relevant analyses, males were coded as 0 and females were coded as 1.

2.3 Data analysis

Because of the data's hierarchical nature (teachers nested within schools) and considering each school's unique culture, norms, and values, the study needed to account for school effects, that is, unknown similarities between teachers belonging to the same school (Bryk and Raudenbush, 1992). To date, the study of intent to leave work has focused on the individual level more than on group effects (Griffeth *et al.*, 2000; Liu and Meyer, 2005; Rosser and Townsend, 2006; Shaw *et al.*, 2005). Teachers' nesting within schools may elucidate both the individual and school levels, and may allow better validation of previously used measures. Therefore, the current study applied multilevel analysis and the mixed-model statistical analysis system (SAS) procedure. All variables entered into the model were at an individual level, and the

group (school) level was included in the model as a random effect. Consistent with Chan's (1998) direct consensus model, the importance of the higher level construct (schools) was assumed to lie in the consensus of the lower level units (individuals).

Mediational analysis method was tested to explain mechanisms underlying female and male teachers' relationships between organizational justice, organizational commitment, and intent to leave. The basic mediational framework involves a three-variable system where an initial independent variable affects a mediational variable, which in turn affects an outcome variable (Kenny *et al.*, 1998; Krull and MacKinnon, 2001).

3. Results

The *t*-test results for intent to leave showed a significant difference between male teachers ($M = 2.14$, $SE = 0.92$) and female teachers ($M = 1.98$, $SE = 0.92$), $t(1,016) = 2.50$, $p < 0.05$, indicating that males tend to leave school more than females, fully supporting *H1*.

As shown in Table I (Model 1, the zero order), the negative relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave was higher among males than among females, fully supporting *H2a*. However, *H2b* was barely confirmed. The negative relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave was higher among females than among males (Model 1, the zero order), but the difference between the *B*s was not higher, as in the case of distributive justice.

Variable	Model 1		Model 2 Mediated effect with affective and normative commitment	
	Zero order <i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE
<i>Distributive justice</i>				
Females				
Distributive justice	-0.10* (-0.09)	0.04	0.05	0.04
Affective commitment			-0.58***	0.05
Normative commitment			-0.22***	0.05
Males				
Distributive justice	-0.31*** (-0.29)	0.06	-0.14**	0.05
Affective commitment			-0.39***	0.07
Normative commitment			-0.27***	0.07
<i>Procedural justice</i>				
Females				
Procedural justice	-0.48*** (-0.36)	0.05	-0.01	0.05
Affective commitment			-0.57***	0.06
Normative commitment			-0.22***	0.04
Males				
Procedural justice	-0.45*** (-0.41)	0.06	-0.12	0.06
Affective commitment			-0.38***	0.07
Normative commitment			-0.26***	0.08

Notes: Mixed-model SAS procedure; effect size in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$

Table I.
Mediation of the relationship between organizational justice (distributive/procedural) and intent to leave, by affective and normative commitment

To verify the finding, effect sizes for the relationships between organizational justice (procedural/distributive) and intent to leave were confirmed separately for males and for females. The effect sizes, which measure the strength of the statistical relationships (Cohen, 1988), were moderately high. In sum, male-female distinctions emerged overall, and for distributive justice the difference was prominent.

Figure 1 provides graphic illustration of the significant interactions in Table II. When perceived distributive justice was low males tended to leave significantly more than females do ($B = -0.21, p < 0.01$; females = reference point), supporting *H3*. Moreover, at any level of distributive justice a strong negative relationship emerged between distributive justice and intent to leave among males. Females showed almost no change in the relationship, supporting *H3b*.

H4 was partially supported. Tables I and III present results of hierarchical analyses according to Kenny *et al.*'s (1998) suggested steps, using a series of mixed-model regression analyses to test for mediated relationships. According to this model, four criteria must be met to support a mediated relationship:

- (1) The independent variable, organizational justice (distributive/procedural), must be related to the mediators (affective and normative commitment).
- (2) Organizational justice (distributive/procedural) must be related to the dependent variable (intent to leave).

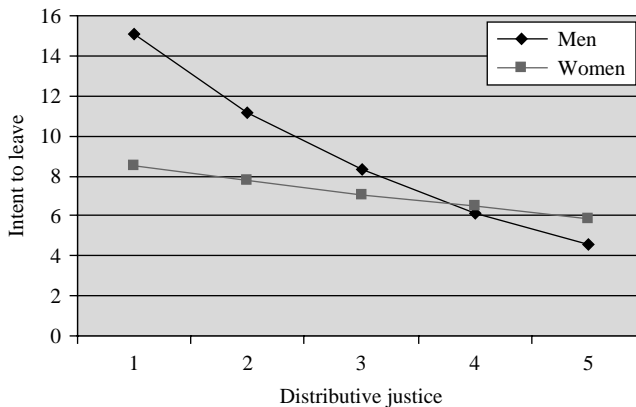


Figure 1. Predicting intent to leave by the interaction between distributive justice and sex

Variable	<i>B</i>	SE
Constant	2.24***	0.12
Distributive justice	-0.09*	0.04
Male	0.78***	0.21
Female	0.00	0.00
Distributive justice × male	-0.21**	0.07
Distributive justice × female (reference point)	0.00	0.00

Notes: Mixed-model SAS procedure; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, and *** $p < 0.001$

Table II. Regression to predict intent to leave by distributive justice, sex, and their interaction

- (3) Affective and normative commitment must be related to intent to leave, with organizational justice (distributive/procedural) included in the model.
- (4) The relationship between organizational justice (distributive/procedural) and intent to leave must be nonsignificant after controlling for the mediator variable.

Evidence of partial mediation occurs if the relationship between organizational justice (distributive/procedural) and intent to leave lessens but remains significant for affective and normative commitment.

Based on Kenny *et al.*'s (1998) criterion (1), Table III presents the relationships between organizational justice and organizational commitment. Both distributive and procedural justice were significantly positively related to both affective and normative commitment.

Table I (Model 2) indicates that the two organizational commitment dimensions (affective/normative) fully mediated the relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave both among female and male teachers. The relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave was non-significant after controlling for affective and normative commitment (for females: from $-0.48, p < 0.001$ to $-0.01, p > 0.05$; for males: from $-0.45, p < 0.001$ to $-0.12, p > 0.05$).

However, for distributive justice among females, both dimensions of organizational commitment (affective/normative) fully mediated the relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave. The relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave was non-significant after controlling for affective and normative commitment (from $-0.10, p < 0.05$ to $0.05, p > 0.05$). In contrast, distributive justice among males showed only partial mediation: The relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave decreased (from $-0.31, p < 0.001$ to $-0.14, p < 0.01$) but remained significant for affective and normative commitment.

Figure 2 shows the male-female differences that emerged when testing the mediation effect of affective and normative commitment regarding distributive justice. Figure 3 shows the full mediation effect that emerged for both females and males regarding procedural justice.

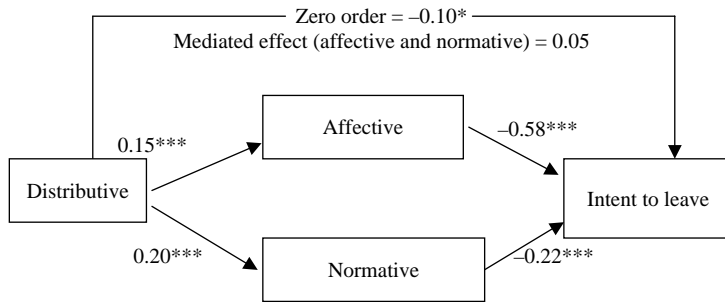
4. Discussion

The present study expands current knowledge on intent to leave work by examining male-female differences in teachers' perceptions about distributive and procedural justice in schools and by testing the mediating role of teachers' affective and normative

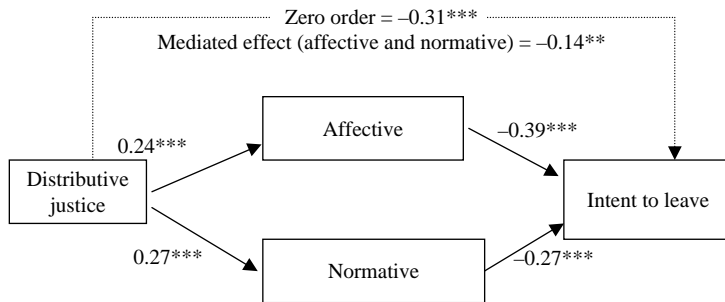
Table III.
Distributive and procedural justice related to affective and normative commitment (males/females)

Variable	Affective commitment		Normative commitment	
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE
Distributive justice – males	0.24*	0.05	0.27*	0.05
Distributive justice – females	0.15*	0.03	0.20*	0.03
Procedural justice – males	0.49*	0.05	0.55*	0.05
Procedural justice – females	0.59*	0.03	0.62*	0.04

Notes: Mixed procedure; * $p < 0.001$

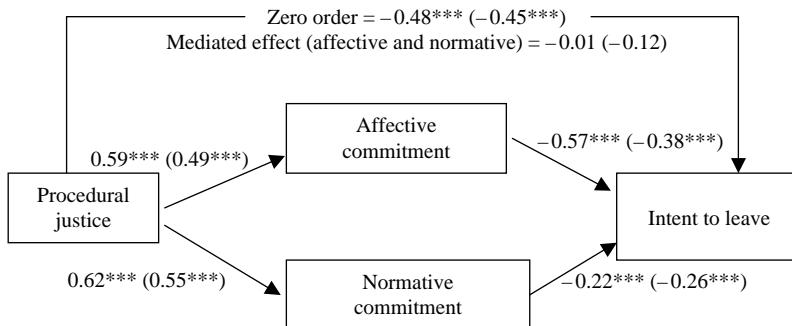


(a) Full mediation model among female teachers



(b) Partial mediation model among male teachers

Notes: Mixed-model SAS procedure; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$



Notes: Mixed-model SAS procedure; male teachers' results are in parentheses; * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 2. Testing the mediation of the relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave, by affective and normative commitment among female and male teachers

Figure 3. Mediation of the relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave, by affective and normative commitment among female and male teachers

commitment to their organization. Results strongly suggest that male-female differences in Israeli teachers' intent to leave work cannot be ignored. Male and female teachers perceive their work differently, which in turn differently affects their intentions to leave their positions. The current findings support the notion that males and females may have different sets of expectations concerning their responsibilities at work (Feingold, 1994; Nelson, 2005; Russ and McNeilly, 1995).

The present analyses confirmed that low distributive justice, seen by teachers as an unfair balance between their investment and its rewards, was the leading factor contributing to differences between male and female teachers, as expressed through their intent to leave. The present finding that female teachers less often intend to leave school than their male counterparts supports some prior studies (Elvira and Cohen, 2001; Lilly *et al.*, 2006) and contradicts others (Foley *et al.*, 2005; Lambert and Hogan, 2009; Lilly *et al.*, 2006; Tipton, 2002). The current results substantiate the importance of investigating “organizational context” variables like rewards and promotion opportunities, in addition to self-reported employee perceptions, when addressing employees’ intent to leave.

Apparently, factors other than sociodemographic ones can explain male-female differences in teachers’ intent to leave. Support for this conjecture may be found in the finding that although female teachers experience lower distributive justice than males in the schools where they teach, females tend to react less than males by planning to leave. These results coincide with the literature pinpointing a lower influence of distributive justice on female teachers and a lower intent to leave in female than in male teachers (Asdigian *et al.*, 1994; Kwon, 2006; Lee and Farh, 1999; Tata, 2000).

These findings may be explained in several ways:

- Females typically use other females as their social comparison group and consequently have lower expectations for extrinsic work rewards than do men.
- Females feel less entitled to job rewards than males do (Lilly *et al.*, 2006), thus females may be more accepting of sex-based inequality in job rewards and conditions.
- Males are socialized to derive satisfaction from outcomes and thereby may focus more on outcome fairness issues.
- In moral problem solving, males primarily employ a justice orientation characterized by considerations of fairness and equity, whereas females focus on fairness of processes (Foley *et al.*, 2005; Gilligan, 1982).

The results also indicate that the relationship between procedural justice and intent to leave is fully mediated by both the affective and normative components of organizational commitment both for female and male teachers. However, only among female teachers was the relationship between distributive justice and intent to leave fully mediated by organizational commitment (affective/normative); among male teachers it was partially mediated. The current findings appear to contradict Meyer *et al.*’s (2002) suggestion that the antecedents of both components of organizational commitment may differ, calling for future research.

The current mediational relationships broaden the traditional approach that posited a direct relationship between organizational justice and intent to leave. Moreover, the present outcomes differentiate between the obvious male-female differences in the case of distributive justice and the weaker differences in the case of procedural justice. Female teachers who perceived high-distributive justice were clearly more committed to their schools and therefore less inclined to leave, whereas males only sometimes increased their commitment to such schools and at other times intended to leave without the mediation of organizational commitment. These results can explain the weaker relationship found between distributive justice and intent to leave among

females than among males. In the case of female teachers, this relationship was mediated by organizational commitment. Thus, future studies in this area would do well to test mediator models rather than examine the direct effects of the study variables.

4.1 Limitations, future research, and implications

This study's main limitation is that self-reported measures of organizational justice, organizational commitment, and intent to leave are likely to reflect same-source bias (Blau *et al.*, 2005). Although some precautions were used (e.g. comparing self-reports and school records regarding teacher absence), future studies should expand such safeguards against self-report bias.

Another possible limitation relates to the generalizability of the current teachers' outcomes to other occupational sectors. Inasmuch as the main results here resembled prior studies of public and private sectors, similar findings may be expected in other occupational sectors and organization types. In addition, this study focuses on the Israeli context. Further study needs to generalize the current outcomes to other cultural contexts.

In general, the findings show clear differences between the perceptions of males and females concerning intent to leave work. Researchers can broaden the scope of this study by adding mediating variables such as intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, career orientation, and family-work conflicts, which were found to explain the study's mediating model between organizational justice, organizational commitment, and intent to leave.

Practically, the results of the present study suggest that school administrators should become aware of male-female difference in justice perception and try to build a just climate in their schools. Policy makers should focus on factors perceived to be important to male and female teachers separately, as distributive and procedural justice may affect males and females differently. Teachers' organizational commitment can be increased through the provision of adequate material rewards and opportunities for advancement on the job. Teachers' salaries and benefits need to be improved to attract more males into the profession and, simultaneously, to retain current teachers, especially males. Administrators should enact an equitable human resource policy with respect to the promotion of female teachers, so that deserving female teachers are promoted. At the very least, it is hoped this study will lead to increased awareness and further research of inequities and male-females differences on this issue.

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