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PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYEE LATENESS (ANALYSIS OF DATA FROM A WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to study the predictors of employee lateness using a data set from a waste management company, Istanbul, Turkey. The statistical analysis showed significant gender differences regarding employee lateness, with women having higher rates of tardiness than men. Moreover, tardiness was found to be highly correlated with age, education, tenure, department, month and astrological signs. Finally, the findings of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that age and education level (employee characteristics), tenure and department (job characteristics) and month, day and astrological sign (non-work characteristics) were the predictors of employee lateness.

Key Words: *tardiness, employee lateness, astrological sign, Turkey.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Lateness is defined as arriving at work after some fixed time (Shifman and Koslowsky, 2014). Although it is a serious problem for both organizations as well as employees, there has been very limited number of empirical studies examining tardiness compared to other employee withdrawal behaviors (i.e. lateness, turnover).

Lateness may affect negatively the production schedule, output level and quality of service of the organization (Koslowsky, 2000), which could result in economic losses. A study conducted by Heathrow Express reported that the annual cost of employee lateness amounts to about $9 billion to the British economy (Mercer, 2012). Moreover, DeLonzor claimed that employee lateness costs at least $3 billion a year to the U.S. economy (Veenstra, 2015).

Employee lateness has been studied from different perspectives, and the findings show that arriving late to work is affected by a combination of factors. Job satisfaction has been identified as an explanatory factor in the empirical studies.

For example, a study by Foust (2001) claimed that job satisfaction was a determinant of employee lateness. Similarly, a study among female telephone operators conducted by Adler and Golan (1981) stated that job satisfaction and work tedium were significant predictors of tardiness.

A number of studies have analyzed the impact of relations with co-workers on employee lateness. For instance, Bardsley (1987) revealed in his study on the correlates of lateness among hourly-paid employees in a manufacturing company (N=181) that as employees were more satisfied with the work group, lateness decreased. A study by Eder and Eisenberger (2008) is another supportive example. The researchers suggested that high perceived organizational support reduced the negative impact of the group on individual tardiness behavior.

Several empirical studies have examined the situational and contextual factors (such as organizational climate, justice and commitment) that influence employee tardiness. In a study using a sample from a public university and a health care facility, Elicker et al. (2008) showed that organizational climate was a

main predictor of tardiness behavior. In another study of a sample of Israeli teachers, Shapira-Lishchinsky (2007) found that lateness was linked to distributive justice for females. Likewise, a study by Berkovits and Koslowsky (2002) concluded that tardy employees had significantly lower levels of time urgency and organizational commitment than punctual employees had. Consistent with these results, Koslowsky and Berkovits (2001) reported that organizational commitment was more highly related to a self-report lateness than to actual behavior.

On the other hand, other forms of withdrawal have been analyzed as predictors of employee tardiness. In their meta-analysis, for instance, Berry et al. (2012) concluded that lateness was correlated with absenteeism (0.26) and turnover (0.1). Beehr and Gupta (1978) came to a similar result on the relationship of absenteeism and turnover intent with tardiness. Moreover, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Even-Zohar (2011) found a positive relationship between lateness and absence frequency.

Additionally, a few studies have examined the role of various other factors in employee lateness. Clark, Peters and Tomlinson (2005) revealed that lateness was higher for male, service and private sector employees. A notable research was conducted by Bardsley and Rhodes (1996) examining factors correlated with voluntary and involuntary lateness. The authors indicated that the ability to be punctual and motivation were the key predictors of employee tardiness. Likewise, Rogelberg et al. (2014) conducted a study investigating the causes of lateness to meetings. The results demonstrated that tardiness was related to intent to quit, age, satisfaction with the meeting, and conscientiousness.

The purpose of the paper is to study the predictors of employee lateness using a data set from a waste management company, Istanbul, Turkey. More specifically, the present study seeks to answer three research questions: (1) Are there significant differences between groups regarding lateness? (2) Is there a correlation between the variables? (3) What are the predictors of employee tardiness?

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: the study methodology is explained in the next section. The third section presents the empirical findings of the research. The final section provides the concluding remarks of the study.

2. METHOD

2.1. Data

The data set was extracted from computerized personnel records of the company for a period from January 1 through December 31, 2015. It included 128 full-time employees. The data contained employee and job characteristics as well as the date and duration of the tardiness.

2.2. Sample

The sample was mostly male, predominantly blue-collar and slightly young. Particularly, of the sample, 84 percent (108) were male, and 78 percent (100) were blue-collar workers, with mean age of 36.2 years ± 5.6, ranging from 25 to 55 years. The average tenure was 8.4 years. More than two thirds of the sample was married (68%). 44 percent had a bachelor's degree. 57% of the employees had from one to three children.

2.3. Variables

Lateness was the dependent variable, which was defined by the number of minutes late to work. The independent variables were employee characteristics (i.e. gender, age), job characteristics (i.e. department, position) and non-work characteristics (i.e. month, astrological sign).

2.4. Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics involving the mean values and standard deviations were used to summarize the data. The significant differences were examined the analysis of variance (ANOVA). The Spearman's correlation analysis was performed to evaluate the correlations between the variables. Lastly, the study investigated the predictors of employee lateness by the hierarchical regression analysis.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The summary of descriptive statistics (means and standard deviation) for lateness is presented in Table 1. The mean tardiness of the sample was 28.8 minutes, ranging from 5 to 60 minutes. The ANOVA results indicated that there were significant differences between groups.

For example, it was detected significant gender differences in lateness, with women having higher rates of tardiness than men. A similar difference was seen between single and married employees. Further, employees with three or more children were more likely to be late as compared to employees who have two or less children.

Tardiness also showed a meaningful difference regarding education level. Likewise, there was a significant difference between departments. Moreover, employee lateness was observed meaningfully higher in the second part of the year. Another difference was observed between weekdays and weekends. Finally, tardiness was found to significantly differ by astrological sign.

TABLE 1: RESULTS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Variables		Lateness (min)	
		Mean	SD
Gender	Male	28,4	16,8
	Female	30,2*	17,6
Marital status	Single	27,8	17,8
	Married	29,3*	16,5
Number of children	No children	28,2	17,9
	1	28,6	16,1
	2	28,1	15,2
	3 or more	30,8*	17,1
Education	Non-bachelor's degree	26,3	15,9
	Having bachelor's degree	30,3**	17,5
Department	Support	31,8**	17,1
	Operational	29,5	17,8
	Technical	22,6	15,1
Month	January-June	25,6	16,5
	July-December	30,5**	17,1
Day	Weekdays	29,1*	17,1
	Weekends	24,5	15,9
Astrological sign	Fire Signs	29,7	16,9
	Earth Signs	29,1	17,9
	Air Signs	26,7	16,2
	Water Signs	29,9*	17,1

***p < .05 **p < .001**

3.2. Correlation Analysis of Variables

The correlations among the variables are depicted in Table 2. Most of the correlations were statistically significant. For instance, the correlation between lateness and gender was statistically significant (r=.05), meaning that female employees were more likely to be late than male employees. Similarly, employee lateness was found to be significantly and positively linked to age (r=.06) and tenure (r=.06).

Moreover, lateness was also observed to be significantly and positively linked to marital statue (r= .05) and the number of children (r= .05), meaning that employees that were married and had 3 or more children tended to more likely to arrive at work lately than others. Again there was a strong positive correlation between tardiness and education (r= .12).

TABLE 2: RESULTS OF THE CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Variables	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1. Employee Lateness	_									
2. Gender	*,05**	_								
3. Age	*,06***	*-,01*	_							
4. Marital status	*,05**	*-,26***	*,39***	_						
5. Number of children	*,05**	*-,44***	*,45***	*,69***	_					
6. Education	*,12***	*,32***	*-,11***	*-,05**	*-,10***	_				
7. Tenure	*,06***	*,04*	*,71***	*,28***	*,40***	*-,11***	_			
8. Department	-,25**	-34**	-,17**	,05**	-,01	-,24**	-,35**	_		
9. Month	*,14***	*,08***	*-,12***	*-,02*	*-,06***	*,07***	*-,11***	*-,07***	_	
10. Astrological sign	*,16***	*,10***	*-,04**	*-,24***	*-,08***	*,06***	*,13***	*-,12***	*,03*	_

***Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

A strong negative correlation was found between tardiness and department (r= -.25). Additionally, there was a strong and positive association between tardiness and month (r= -.14). Finally, lateness had a positive correlation with astrological sign (*r*= .16), showing that lateness was higher for the employees under the Water Signs. Position, type of work, and day were not significantly related to employee tardiness.

3.3. Predictors of Employee Lateness

The hierarchical regression analysis was performed to explore the predictors of employee lateness. The independent variables were entered in three steps. The results of the regression models are represented in Table 3.

The predictor variables, employee characteristics involving gender, age, marital status, the number of children and education, were introduced into the model in the first step. The findings revealed that overall, model 1 was significant in predicting employee tardiness, accounting for 2.6% of the total variance (F=12,779, p<.001). The most predictor of employee lateness was education (β=.14, p<.001), meaning that more-educated employees were more likely to be late than less-educated employees. Moreover, age (β=.05, p<.05) was a statistically significant explanatory variable of lateness, suggesting that increases in tardiness were associated with being older.

Job characteristics including tenure, department and type of work were inserted in step 2, along with the variables in Model 1. The entire model accounted for 7.6% of the variance in employee tardiness (F=43,336, p<.001). Department (β=–.24, p<.001) was found to be the strongest indicator of tardiness, indicating that employees from operational and technical departments had higher rates of tardiness. Tenure (β=–.07, p<.05) was also a negative significant predictor, showing that less-tenured employees were prone to have greater levels of tardiness than more-tenured employees.

TABLE 3: RESULTS OF THE HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS FOR LATENESS

Predictors	Model 1**			Model 2**			Model 3**		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Employee characteristics									
(1) Gender	,97	,95	,24	-2,19	,97	-,05*	-2,85	,95	-,07*
(2) Age	,14	,07	,05*	,17	,09	,06	,27	,09	,09
(3) Marital status	,26	,96	,01	1,4	,96	,04	2,94	,96	,08
(4) Number of children	,56	,38	,04	,05	,38	,01	-,22	,38	-,02
(5) Education	1,24	,19	,14**	,74	,22	,08**	,87	,22	,10**
Job characteristics									
(6) Tenure				-,25	,11	-,07*	-,33	,11	-,09
(7) Department				-4,83	,45	-,26**	-4,52	,44	-,24*
(8) Type of work				-,14	,86	-,01	,78	,85	,02**
Non-work characteristics									
(10) Month							4,15	,70	,12**
(11) Day							,46	,21	,04*
(12) Astrological sign							,82	,09	,17**
R^2 for Model	2,6%			7,4%			11,5%		
R^2 Change	2,6%			4,9%			4,1%		
F Change in R^2	12,779			43,336			36,922		

**P < 0.05 **P < 0.01*

In the third step, non-work characteristics, inclusive of month, day, and astrological sign, were entered into the Model. With the addition of non-work characteristics, the percent of variance explained by the model increased to 11.5% (F=36,922, p<.001). All three predictors were statistically significant, with astrological sign having the strongest relationship with tardiness (β=.17, p<.001), implying that employees under Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces were associated with higher levels of tardiness. Month also significantly predicted employee lateness (β=.12, p<.001), stating that employee lateness increased in the second part of years. Finally, day was another significant indicator of tardiness (β=.04; p<.05), illustrating that employees were more likely to have higher levels of lateness in weekdays than in weekends.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Employee lateness is a significant issue leading to loss of productivity, financial costs and non-financial consequences such as disciplinary problems and grievances. However there has been a relatively little attention to the determinants and the results of tardiness in the literature. The present study was carried out to assess the predictors of employee lateness in a sample of employees from an environmental management company, Istanbul, Turkey. It is possible to summarize the main findings of the study.

Overall, the results of the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that age and education (employee characteristics), tenure and department (job characteristics), and month, day and astrological sign (non-work characteristics) were the predictors of employee lateness. This is consistent with the findings of Balow (2015), Rogelberg et al. (2014) and Shapira-Lishchinsky (2012) as well as with the findings of Bardsley and Rhodes (1996), which showed that age was a predictor of lateness. It is also in agreement with the study of Eder and Eisenberger (2008), in which tenure was found a determinant of tardiness. However, this finding differs from the study of Balow (2015), which found that tenure was not a predictor of tardiness. It is also in contrast to the study of Bardsley and Rhodes (1996), which observed that education and tenure were not indicators of employee lateness.

Secondly, the results of correlation analysis indicated that employee lateness was positively and significantly correlated with gender, age, education, marital status, the number of children, and tenure but was negatively and significantly related to department. This result is in agreement with the study of Lishchinsky and Even-Zohar (2011), stating that there was a significant correlation between sex and tardiness. It is also in line with the study of Bardsley (1987), in which age was found to be related to tardiness. Again, this result is in accordance with the findings of Blau et al. (2004), which asserted that there was a meaningful correlation between employee's lateness behavior and the number of children.

However, the findings are inconsistent with the results of Koslowsky et al. (1997) as well as with the results of Hanisch and Hulin (1991), which reported that individual factors (sex, age, education) were not significantly related to tardiness.

The findings are also in contrast to the study of Balow (2015), in which marital status, age, tenure and the number of children were found to be not associated with tardiness. Moreover, the results are in contrast to the study by Bardsley (1987), in which tardiness was not correlated with gender, education level and tenure.

An interesting finding was that lateness was found to be positively and significantly related to astrological signs, illustrating that employees born under the Water Signs including Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces were prone to have higher rates of tardiness in comparison with employees born under other signs. Another striking result was that there was a relationship between tardiness and month, implying that the incidence of lateness increased dramatically in the second part of the year.

Furthermore, the ANOVA analysis showed that the variables of gender, marital status, the number of children, education, department, month, day and astrological sign demonstrated significant differences on lateness, while the variables of tenure, type of work and position did not.

This finding is consistent with the results of Bardsley (1987), in which the frequency distributions of tardiness were observed to be different for the male and female samples.

In conclusion, based on the findings of the present study, employee lateness is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. For future research, it is important to examine other possible factors affecting tardiness. Thus further studies should focus on individual and organizational variables, such as personality traits, job satisfaction and company culture, associated with employee lateness.

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