# The Analysis of the Workers Perceptions Regarding Mobbing Towards Themselves and Against Colleagues: Applied to Teachers

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this study is to reveal what level the teachers working in the educational institutions perceive mobbing in the workplace and to determine that if there is a difference between the perceptions regarding mobbing towards themselves and against their colleagues. In this research, a questionnaire was prepared by using previously developed scales and the research was applied on the teachers in primary and secondary schools (n = 381) affiliated with the Ministry of Education in Province Ankara. t-test was used to test the data obtained through the questionnaire to measure central tendency (frequency and percentage distributions) and for the detection of the difference between the averages. As a conclusion, the difference in the perception of mobbing on the teachers' themselves and friends has been identified.*

**Keywords:** Mobbing, Mobbing Perception, Teachers

## 1. Introduction

One of the major issues in businesses human resource management is the violence exposed in the workplace. Aggressive behaviors with dimensions such as physical, verbal and sexual harassment with respect to organizational psychology affect employees directly or indirectly and also causes many problems. The workplace violence to be encountered under the general heading of behavioral diversity is very different. It is difficult to draw the line of what constitutes violent behavior and what is its severity and its perception in different cultures and situations that define the phenomenon of workplace violence is also a major problem as well (Chappel, et al., 2006).

In this research, the concept of mobbing which has a negative impact on mobbing (psychological violence) individuals and organizations is discussed.

The meaning of the word "mobbing", based on words "mobile vulgus" in Latin and "mob" comes from English root, has been used as to remove the other individuals by suppression, emotional and psychological terror attacks (Çınar and Dursun, 2012; Koç and Bulut; 2009).

Psychological violence (mobbing) concept, first emerged from a study of animal behavior in 1960 by Austrian Konrad Lorenz. With the word mobbing, Lorenz meant "counterattacks that comes from smaller animal groups against the threat of a large animal'' and used "mobbing" concept to describe "behavior that isolates victim and takes up suicide due to despair" (Koç and Topaloğlu; 2013). In the later years, this concept has been used by various scientists.

Use of the concept of mobbing in work life, began in the early 1980s by German psychology professor Heinz Leymann. Leymann defined workplace mobbing as a kind of psychological terror. According to this definition "mobbing" in business life is described as the sum of variety of systematically hostile and immoral behaviors done by one or several persons against the target person or persons (Leymann, 1990,1996; Koç and Topaloğlu, 2013; Deniz, 2012).

According to the definition of International Labour Organization, mobbing, "is a form of psychological harassment that contains vengeful, cruel or malicious attempts, to criticize unfairly and consistently in a negative attitude, to isolate from social environment, to weaken by gossips or spread of false rumors or humiliation to afflict an employee or a group of employees " (Ulusoy, 2013).

As a form of Systematic violence, "Mobbing" was reported to increase in countries such as Australia, Austria, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. Collective violence in Europe has often been referred to as "mobbing" (Chappel, et al., 2006). It is stated that the fact of psychological violence has been accepted as a serious problem in the workplace since the end of 1990s. Mobbing (psychological violence) causes many problems within the organization and outside the organization.

Mobbing is a process that consists of abusive behaviors. Mobbing has a negative impact on people, organizations and society. Mobbing is performed in order to completely exclude people from business life and in terms of reputation it is applied at the same level by the employee's superiors, subordinates and colleagues (Koç and Bulut, 2009; İlhan, 2010). Psychological violence individuals face causes a lot of physical and psychological discomforts and problems. Mobbing does not only harm individuals by making victims feel fear, nothingness sense, lack of confidence, declining personal esteem, feeling demoralized emotional reactions, decrease at creating and productivity, increase of blood pressure and pulse rate, obsession, depression and cause health issues; it also gives the organization large amount of losses by causes a decrease in motivation, performance, productivity and creativity, discord and alienation at work, dissatisfaction and creating absenteeism and employee turnover as well (Aylan, 2012).

Mobbing is an organizational problem which harms significantly the organization and deteriorates health of organization as well as employee.

According to researches, the organizations and professional groups which mobbing has been observed most of all in nonprofit organizations like health care, universities and voluntary organizations (Leymann, 1990). It is also widespread in the educational sector, especially it occures more often in universities (T.B.M.M, 2011).

The aim of this study is to determine the differentiation between the levels of mobbing which are perceived by teachers toward themselves and against their colleagues working in school. The hypothesis of research in this context is defined as follows.

**Hı:** There is a difference between the mobbing perceptions which teachers perceive for themselves and for their colleagues.

## 2. Method

In this research in order to obtain objective results, questions were asked to teachers regarding to perception of mobbing towards themselves and against colleagues in order measure mobbing in a realistic way. In many researches, levels of psychological violence have been found low. In this study, research has moved towards the view that there was a difference between the mobbing perceptions applied on themselves and those applied against their other colleagues in the workplace. In this context, the literature relevant the topic was scanned and a questionnaire was formed consisting of 45-a Heinz Leymann expression containing mobbing scale.

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The mobbing scale of the survey applied on teachers constituting the sampling group has five dimensions generally accepted in the literature. These dimensions are the first 11 (1-11. Questions) including questions " Affecting Contact Form " dimension, the latter five (12-16. Questions) including questions " Attacking Social Relations " dimension and the third 15 (17-31. Questions) including questions " Attacking Reputation ", the fourth and 7 (32-38. Questions) including questions about "Attacking Life and Work Quality" dimension and the fifth is 7 (39 - 45. Questions) the question consisting of " Affecting Personal Health Directly" dimensions.

Reliability levels of scales for the scale of mobbing Chronbach's alpha coefficient has emerged α = 0.977. The universe of investigation constituted 58,857 teachers who served in Ankara Provincial, according to 2014 data from the Ministry of Education. Because it is not possible to reach the entire universe, making a sample was found appropriate and sample diameter was determined as 381 people.

## 3. Evidences

The descriptive Statistics belonging to the sample group is shown in Table 1. On the other hand the differentiation between teachers' perceptions of mobbing and mobbing against their colleagues is shown in Table 2.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Teachers Who Participated in the Research**

| Demographic Features | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Distribution of gender | Female | 265 | 69,6 |
| | Male | 116 | 30,4 |
| | Total | 381 | 100,0 |
| Marital status | Married | 316 | 82,9 |
| | Single | 65 | 17,1 |
| | Total | 381 | 100,0 |
| Distribution of Branches | Preschool | 18 | 4,7 |
| | School teacher | 61 | 16,0 |
| | Culture | 131 | 34,4 |
| | Vocation | 125 | 32,8 |
| | Art music | 6 | 1,6 |
| | Counsellor | 16 | 4,2 |
| | Physical education(P:E) | 5 | 1,3 |
| | Other | 19 | 5,0 |
| | Total | 381 | 100,0 |
| Distribution of seniority years | 1year or less | 4 | 1,0 |
| | 1-5 years | 49 | 12,9 |
| | 6-10 years | 65 | 17,1 |
| | 11-15years | 93 | 24,4 |
| | 16-20years | 88 | 23,1 |
| | 21-25 years | 49 | 12,9 |
| | 26-30 years | 22 | 5,8 |
| | 31 years and over | 11 | 2,9 |
| | Total | 381 | 100,0 |
| Age Distribution | 23-28 | 34 | 8,9 |
| | 29-34 | 76 | 19,9 |
| | 35-40 | 109 | 28,6 |
| | 41-46 | 109 | 28,6 |
| | 47-52 | 33 | 8,7 |
| | 52-57 | 19 | 5,0 |
| | 58 and over | 1 | ,3 |
| | Total | 381 | 100,0 |

Table 1, shows the answers of the sample groups, its frequency distribution and percentages. Among the 381 teachers participating in the survey, 116 people (30.4% ) were male, 265 people ( 69.9 % ) were female teachers . In terms of marital status , in the sample group the percentage rate of people married was 82.9 % (316 people) and the singles was 17.1% (65 people). When the teachers participating in the study were evaluated in terms of their branches , 34.4% (131) culture, 32.8% (125 ) vocation and 16% (61) were employed as school teacher . When the research sample group was evaluated according to seniority, it has been seen that, 24.4% ( 93 people) worked for 11-15 years , 23,1% ( 88 people) 15-16 (49) working years, 12.9% in the range of 21-25.

If we are to assess participants according to age, the majority group at 28.6% (109 ) and 28.6 %  (109) are seen to be in the middle age group.

**Table 2: The Differentiation of Perceptions between Teachers' Regarding Mobbing Towards Themselves and Against Their Colleagues**

|  |  | N | Mean | s.d. | Avrage Difference | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Factor-1:** Affecting Contact Form | Oneself | 374 | 1,3036 | ,43084 | -,16563 | -6,976 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 374 | 1,4692 | ,54848 |  |  |  |
| **Factor-2:** Job and Task-Oriented Attacks | Oneself | 370 | 1,1577 | ,34365 | -,15626 | -6,754 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 370 | 1,3140 | ,52953 |  |  |  |
| **Factor-3:** Attacks on Social Affairs | Oneself | 375 | 1,1136 | ,24839 | -,16491 | -7,437 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 375 | 1,2785 | ,50297 |  |  |  |
| **Factor-4:** Personality and Reputation Attacks | Oneself | 370 | 1,1778 | ,36402 | -,15041 | -6,439 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 370 | 1,3282 | ,56980 |  |  |  |
| **Factor-5:**Personal Health Attacks | Oneself | 368 | 1,0404 | ,19166 | -,11530 | -5,362 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 368 | 1,1557 | ,42381 |  |  |  |
| **General Average:** Mobbing | Oneself | 377 | 1,1645 | ,25488 | -,15538 | -8,163 | 0,000 |
|  | Colleagues | 377 | 1,3199 | ,45011 |  |  |  |

When the average difference regarding teachers' perceptions regarding mobbing towards themselves and against their colleagues in educational institutions analyzed, in Table 2, at $p < 0.05$  an important level of difference has been found. As can be seen from Table H1 hypothesis was supported with adequate evidence.

When the teachers who participated in the study perception of mobbing, extent of mobbing and in terms of the overall average were analysed, the results were like as follows.

In Factor-1 " Affecting Contact Form " perceptions of mobbing implemented  both towards themselves and against their colleagues has been measured and an important level of difference has been found. The teachers perceptions regarding to the attacks imposed on themselves in the form communication average was= 1.3036, while the attack on their colleagues practiced in the form of communication average = 1.4692. In other words, it was seen that the perception of attacks imposed on teachers in the form of communication was higher with regard to the attacks imposed on colleagues than that applied to them.

In Factor-2 "Job and Task-Oriented Attacks" in terms of teachers perceptions of mobbing implemented both towards themselves and against their colleagues has been measured and an important level of difference has been found. It has been observed that, the teachers perceptions regarding to the job and task-oriented attacks imposed on themselves was average = 1.1577 while attacks applied on colleagues average = 1.3140. In other words, it was seen that the perception of job and task-oriented attacks imposed on teachers was higher with regard to the attacks imposed on colleagues than that applied to them.

In Factor-3  "Attacks on Social Affairs" perceptions of mobbing implemented  both towards themselves and against their colleagues has been measured and an important level of difference has been found. The teachers perceptions regarding to the attacks imposed on themselves regarding social affairs average was = 1.1136, while the attack on their colleagues social affairs average = 1.2785. In other words, it was seen that the perception of job and task-oriented attacks imposed on teachers was higher with regard to the attacks imposed on colleagues than that applied to them.

Factor-4 in the "Personality and Reputation Attacks" perceptions of mobbing implemented  both towards themselves and against their colleagues has been measured and an important level of difference has been found. The teachers perceptions regarding to the attacks imposed on themselves regarding personality and reputation average was = 1.1778, while the attack on their colleagues personality and reputation was = 1.3282. In other words, it was seen that the perception of personality and reputation attack imposed on teachers was higher with regard to the attacks imposed on colleagues than that applied to them.

Factor-5 "Personal Health Attacks" perceptions of mobbing implemented  both towards themselves and against their colleagues has been measured and an important level of difference has been found.

The teachers perceptions regarding to the attacks imposed on themselves regarding personal health was= 1.0404, while the attack on their colleagues personal health was = 1.1557. In other words, the teachers applied for colleagues attacks on personal health perceptions are understood to be higher than that applied to them.

## 4. Conclusions

Mobbing is seen as an important problem for both private, and public organizations It could be said the focus on studies regarding mobbing in Turkey unlike the studies in Europe took place in the last 10 years focused. On the other hand, it has been supported by the research done in this field that mobbing practices began to emerge in educational institutions. First, studies in the literature proves the existence of the phenomenon of mobbing in educational organizations (Koç and Bulut, 2009; Karabacak and Akın, 2014). However, the research is limited to personal assessment or implemented as self-directed measurements.

This study tried to contribute to the determination of teachers' perceptions regarding mobbing towards themselves and against their colleagues in the institutions they work. For this purpose, the teachers perceptions regarding the mobbing they suffered in the school they were employed and against their colleagues were measured, statistically it was found that an important level of difference existed. In other words, it was seen that the perception of attacks imposed on teachers was higher with regard to the attacks imposed on colleagues than that applied to them. In this case the mobbing behavior of teachers implemented at their school revealed stunning results in terms of objective evaluation. Considering the results obtained it could be said that mobbing is higher in the corporate sense.

Education is the most important process for the individualization and socialization of an individuals. In this process, the importance of training programs is very important as improvement of the physical and mental health quality of educators. The teachers confronting mobbing and mobbing behavior which exists in their environment will have a negative impact on the performance and effectiveness of teachers and this will adversely affect the quality of education. Administrators in educational organizations can develop some policies and practices or can collaborate with the organization that at the present applies policies. Measures Psychological can be taken against violence.

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