

Teachers' Mobbing Perception: A Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract—Schools are among the most stressful ecologies because of the nature of learning. The most typical reflection of this is mobbing. Mobbing, which has the potential to destroy schools' effectiveness and efficiency, also affects teachers' performance adversely on an individual basis. Teachers' awareness and perception of mobbing is critical for fighting against it.

The purpose of this study is to determine the meanings teachers ascribe to mobbing and the behaviors that they are exposed to and then to assess these within literature. The study was carried out on 44 teachers working in Elazığ, Turkey. For the study, which is qualitative research, the data were collected via open-ended interview forms and then these data were analyzed using content analysis. In order to support this analysis, descriptive statistical techniques were employed as well. The results obtained from the analysis are as follows: The meanings that the teachers in the study ascribe to mobbing are generally similar to those in literature, except for some. They usually describe mobbing as a continuous psychological harassment, oppression and violence against employees. Leymann (1993) identified 45 different behaviors related to mobbing. The number of behaviors that are considered as mobbing by the teachers in the study is 12. These 12 different behaviors can be considered as a mobbing perception frame of teachers in Turkish culture.

Index Terms—Mobbing, mobbing at schools, teachers' mobbing perception.

I. INTRODUCTION

The most important output and product of education organizations is "learning". Learning is a hard and stressful job because of its nature. For this reason, along with health sector, schools maintaining education are considered as one of the most stressful ecologies of society [1], [2]. The case affects the relationship and communication between school employees adversely. This adverse effect is usually seen as mobbing.

The term "mobbing" was first used by famous ethnologist Konrad Lorenz in 1960s ([3]. The first name that comes to mind about the concept of mobbing is no doubt Heinz Leymann. Mobbing is derived from "mobile vulgus", which means "unsteady crowd" in Latin language, and it means siege, attacking altogether and bothering [4]. Leyman [5], who qualifies mobbing as "workplace terror", defines it as "Unethical communication and hostile acts that one or several people head to one person". Mobbing is a kind of systematic and long term behavior directly intended for an

employee that can lead to psychological and physiological damage [6]. Einarsen [7] defines mobbing as rude behaviors towards employees. According to Yuceturk [8], mobbing is "long term hostile acts in an organization". "Bullying", which is similar to mobbing, means physical attack and threat. However, physical attacks are very rare in mobbing actions in workplaces [9]. At this point, it is suggested that "bullying" be used for schools, while "mobbing" be used for workplaces [5]. While mobbing decreases teachers' charisma, competence [10] and performance [11], [12], it also reduces school efficiency [13]. All these show that mobbing is important for education. In fact, it is stressed that mobbing is a common problem in schools nowadays [14].

Among the other school employees, the ones who are affected most from the adverse effects of mobbing are undoubtedly teachers. The main reason of this is that they are directly responsible for learning at school [15]. This can be added that the structure of school make mobbing possible as well [16]. Therefore, teachers, who are the most important actor [17] and factor [18] of schools, are at the most risk. And in literature, teachers are said to experience more stress than any other occupational groups' do [15], [19]. Mobbing is attributable to several causes, especially workload [20] and responsibility. The source of mobbing that teachers are exposed to may be administrators, students and other employees. It is important to know about teachers' awareness and perception about mobbing in order to eliminate it from educational ecologies.

II. METHOD

A. Model of the Research

The study is a qualitative research and it was carried out in screening model. Qualitative researches are those which are carried out to reveal perception and cases in their natural environments realistically and holistically using such qualitative data collection methods as observation and document review [21]. As to screening model, it is a research approach aiming to describe a case in the past or present as it is [22].

B. The Working Group

The working group, which was determined by purposeful sampling, consists of 44 teachers working in official schools in Elazığ city center in 2015-2016 academic year. The demographic information about the teachers in study is as follows: Gender: Women ($n=19$; %43,18); Men ($n=25$; 56,82). Working Year: 1-5 years ($n=18$; %40,90), 6-10 years ($n=10$; %22,73), 11-15 years ($n=12$; %27,27), 16-20 years ($n=1$; %2,27), 21 and over ($n=3$; %6,82). School Type: Primary School ($n=17$; %38,64), Secondary School ($n=5$; %11,36), High School ($n=22$; %50,00). Branches:

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Classroom Teachers ($n=17$; %38,64), Religion Course ($n=3$; %6,82), Mathematics ($n=7$; %15,91), Science ($n=6$; %13,64), Language and Social Sciences ($n=9$; %20,45) and Art ($n=2$; %4,55).

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The data in the study were collected via semi-structured interview forms. Semi-structure interview was employed since it enables the data to be coded and analyze them quickly, and helps to make a comparison between the responses provided by the participants [23], [24]. The interview form, which was prepared in accordance with the methodology, consists of total six questions. Of these six questions, four of them are about demographic information, while the rest two is about mobbing. This form was applied to the working group by the researchers. In order to analyze the data, content

analysis was used, and descriptive statistical techniques were also employed as a supportive way. In order to clarify the analysis of qualitative findings and to promote reliability, quantitative techniques can be employed [21]. In order to support the data analyzed by content analysis, direct quotations were provided as well.

III. FINDINGS AND THEIR INTERPRETATIONS

A. Teachers' Mobbing Perception

The answers given to the question "What do you think mobbing is?" addressed to the teachers in the study were collected under some certain titles and presented in Table I.

TABLE I: TEACHERS' MOBBING PERCEPTION

What do you think mobbing is?	f
Continuous psychological harassment, oppression, physical violence against employees	21
Emotional abuse	7
Disturbing employees systematically	5
Oppressive control that managers/superiors have over employees	3
Allusion and humiliation at workplace	2
A satisfaction way/tool of people with high ego	1
Negative social pressure	1
Intimidation with no legal and humanitarian grounds	1
Social bullying that a person/group follow	1

TABLE II: THE BEHAVIORS THAT THE TEACHERS ARE EXPOSED TO

What kind of mobbing behaviors are you exposed to?	f
Excessive control, oppression, workload	15
Ostracisation, being ignorant	6
Not being trusted	3
Being humiliated, being considered worthless	2
Rude behaviors	2
Oppressive control that managers/superiors have over employees	1
Rivalry, personal displeasure	1

Most of the teachers ($n=21$) define mobbing as a "continuous psychological harassment, oppression, physical violence against employees". In this regard, teachers' opinions are remarkable: P-37: "Mobbing is the application of long term, systematic oppression by those who have power towards others". P-9: "According to me, mobbing is 'I have my eye on you'". P-16's opinion on the reasons of mobbing are guiding: "School directors see themselves as the owner of the school, and they see us as workers". P-42 and P-14' expressions who think that mobbing actually depends on people's preferences are interesting: P-42: "Mobbing is a person's preference in superior-subordinate relationship". P-14: "Mobbing is related to how you see the case and at what position you are."

The teachers in the study used 12 different behavior types for describing mobbing. Mobbing is a comprehensive term. Such that, Leymann [25] determined 45 different behavior types about mobbing. These 12 behaviors that the teachers used to define mobbing can be regarded as teachers' perception frame in Turkish culture. Because mobbing is a concept that arise due to socio-cultural factors [9], [26]. However, despite this, it can be said that mobbing perception of teachers in the study are largely parallel with those in the literature. A possible reason of this may be the fact that concepts like mobbing are imported terms, rather than originally-created ones.

It is remarkable that the teachers deal "physical violence" within mobbing. Because, in the literature, emotional

violence is expressed with mobbing, while physical violence is expressed with bullying. A possible reason of this may be that mobbing in the schools in Turkey include psychical violence.

B. The Behaviors That the Teachers Are Exposed to As Mobbing

The answers given to the question "What kind of mobbing behaviors are you exposed to?" were collected under certain titles and presented in Table II.

When the Table II is examined, it is seen that "excessive control, oppression and work load" (n=15) is the behavior that the teachers are exposed to most. This behavior is followed by: "ostracisation, being ignorant" (n=6), "not being trusted" (n=3), "being humiliated" (n=2), "rude behaviors" (n=2) respectively. The source of almost all mobbing behaviors that the teachers are exposed to seem to be the directors. This finding can be interpreted in the way that mobbing in education sector in Turkey is more implemented by school directors. These expressions support this finding: P-13: "The school director is an excessive controller and a perfectionist, and he wants to see everything in military discipline". P-23: "The director uses his authority as a way of oppression". P-14: "Unqualified people should not be let be directors". P-13: "I think that people should take a psychological test before they are directors". P-7: "I want directors who are respectful to others, and who are not selfish, debaser or narcissist". P-2: "The present directs should take a psychological test, and then be reassigned. The expressions can also be seen as the teachers' suggestions to fight against mobbing. The fact that one of three teachers in the study did not express their opinions about mobbing may indicate that they do not have enough information about it.

IV. RESULTS

The results that we reached by this study whose aim was to determine teachers' mobbing perceptions and the behaviors that they are exposed to are as follows: Mobbing, which is usually seen in education sector, is a case that affects school efficiency and teacher performance adversely. It is seen that perceptions of teachers in the study are similar to those in the literature. Mobbing may have many socio-cultural reasons. The teachers in the study mentioned 12 behaviors. When we keep in mind that Leymann [25] discusses 45 different behavior types about mobbing, it can be said that the perceptions of participants about mobbing are limited. The possible reasons of this could be that the teachers are not aware of mobbing enough, or they know little about it. Another reason for this could be that the number of mobbing behaviors in Turkish culture is relatively less than in Western culture. The fact that the teachers in the study mention mobbing with "psychical violence" may depend on some cultural differences. Because, it has been a frequent case in Turkey recently that psychical violence is used as a means of problem solving rather than verbal harassment. Moreover, there is considerable amount of psychical violence in schools.

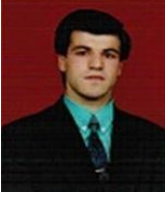
In the study, it is determined that "excessive control, oppression and work load" (n=15) is the negative behavior

(mobbing) that the teachers are exposed to most. This behavior is followed by: "ostracisation, being ignorant", "not being trusted", "being humiliated", "rude behaviors" respectively. These behaviors can be seen as a mobbing frame in Turkish culture. This frame is parallel with the literature. So, it can be said that Turkish and Western cultures are similar to each other about mobbing behaviors in schools

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