

Original Article

Examining mobbing perceptions and organizational commitment levels of physical education and sport teachers

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Abstract:

This paper aimed at examining mobbing behaviors that physical education and sports teachers served in Hatay might be exposed to in school environment and their level of organizational commitment. The research population was composed of 301 physical education and sports teachers selected by random sampling method out of 574 teachers served in Hatay and its counties in the 2012-2013 school year. Negative Acts Questionnaire, Organizational Commitment Scale and the personal information form developed by the author were used as data collection tools. As a result of the research, a significant difference was found between mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of gender; and significant differences were also determined between sub-scales of organizational commitment in terms of gender, age, civil status, service period, educational level and course load.

**Key words:** Mobbing, organizational stability, Bullying at school, organizational commitment, Violence

Introduction

The sense of achievement always leads people to do the best thing. And achievement is likely to be gained in an environment where one is able to express himself within the societal and social values providing the sense of belonging. However, the sense of belonging, as a need in working life, may be lost for various reasons like mobbing (Gülle, 2013). Psychological violence in an organization is not only a personal problem but also an organizational problem severely threatening the organization and affecting the organizational health (Davenport and al, 2003). Mobbing is a process proceeding from the simple to the complex. And the individual exposed to mobbing feels more and more pressure during this process that eventually becomes insufferable (Cobanoglu, 2005). Mobbing in organizations has become one of the most interesting subjects for researcher in recent years (Leymann, 1996; Einarsen and Skogstad, 1996; Zapf, 1999; Hubert and Veldhoven, 2001; Dick and Wagner, 2001; O'Conner, 2004; Teresa and Daniel, 2009; Beale and Hoel, 2011; Korkmaz et al. 2015). In a Scandinavian research, mobbing behaviors were found to occur more frequently in non-profit organizations and educational institutions than in large companies (Kirel 2008). In another research conducted for determining the sector in which psychological violence occurs more frequently, Hubert and Veldhoven (2001) set forth that aggressive behaviors leading psychological violence were displayed by employers and employees in educational institutions, municipalities and public sector. In his research conducted in Turkey, Yildiz (2007) also revealed that 47.1% of health and education professionals were exposed to mobbing behaviors. Such behaviors decrease both the level of organizational commitment and the job performance.

There are several factors affecting the communication between teachers within organizational structure of schools and some of them cause overstress and fatigue in teachers, especially low status of teaching, low salary, attitudes and behaviors of managers, human relations, role conflict, way of supervision and communication, and heavy workload (Capel, 1991; Friesen, Prokop and Sarros, 1988; Dick and Wagner, 2001; Kayum, 2002). In brief, the perceptions of teachers on the quality of school environment have an effect on their organizational commitment, job performance, and the effectiveness of education in school (Hoy and Miskel, 1987; Tsui and Cheng, 1999). In case such troubles persist, problems occur in superior-subordinate relationship in school causing disconnection in organizational communication and thus, leading mobbing. And this difficult process faced with in the organization may decrease the level of organizational commitment of teachers.

Methods

General screening and relational screening models were used to determine the present condition in the research. Relational screening is research model aims to determine existence and/or degree of joint variation between two or more variables (Karasar, 1999).

Population and Sample Group

The population is composed of 574 physical education and sports teachers served in primary and secondary schools under the Ministry of National Education in Hatay and its twelve counties in the 2011-2012

school year. And the sample group consists of total 301 teachers, 88 females and 213 males, selected on a voluntary basis by random sampling method out of 574 physical education and sports teachers constituting the population. All physical education and sports teachers in the research schools were targeted; yet a total of 301 participants were included in the research after eliminating the unreturned, missing and incorrect questionnaires out of the total 410 questionnaires distributed.

*Data Collection Tools*

**Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ):** The level of exposure to mobbing was measured using Negative Acts Questionnaire (Einarsen and Raknes, 1997). The NAQ is a 21-item survey that measures the level of exposure to various negative behaviors.

In each item of the questionnaire, the participants were asked how frequently they had been exposed to certain negative behaviors within the last six months. This frequency is ordered as (1) never, (2) sometimes, (3) every month, (4) every week, and (5) every day. The NAQ was used by Einarsen and Raknes (1997), Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2003), Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002b), and Mikkelsen and Einarsen, S. (2002a), and adapted to Turkish by Cemaloglu (2007). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and item-total correlation coefficient of the NAQ were computed for reliability analysis; and all 21 items were found under the same factor, while reliability coefficient of negative acts items was determined 0.93. It was also seen that corrected item-total correlation coefficient of negative acts items ranged between 0.39 and 0.71 (Cemaloglu, 2007).

**Organizational Commitment Scale (OCS):** The Organizational Commitment Scale was developed by Balay (2000) for measuring the level of organizational commitment of physical education and sports teachers. The OCS is a 5-point Likert scale with 27 items. Studies on structural validity and reliability of the scale were also conducted by Balay (2000). The 27-item OCS includes three sub-scales, namely compliance, identification and internalization.

The OCS is a 5-point Likert scale including (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The scale items were found under three different factors and factor loads of items ranged between 0.49 and 0.85. As an indicator of reliability of each sub-factor of OCS, alpha internal consistency coefficients and item-total correlations were found ranging between 0.38 and 0.68 for the first factor, 0.33 and 0.75 for the second factor, and 0.53 and 0.83 for the third factor; while alpha coefficient was determined 0.79 for the first factor, 0.89 for the second factor, and 0.93 for the third fact.

*Statistical Analysis*

Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were administered to determine whether distribution of scores in the scales were normal; and the observed values were found distributed in a non-normal way in both case. Mann Whitney U-Test, a nonparametric test, was used for comparing two groups, and Kruskal Wallis H-Test, another nonparametric test, was used for comparing three or more groups to determine whether there was a difference between the level of mobbing and the scores in sub-scales of organizational commitment in terms of demographic variables based on the non-normal distribution. Mann Whitney U-Test was used for determining the groups between which a significant difference was found at  $p < 0.05$  and  $p < 0.01$  as a result of Kruskal Wallis H-Test.

**Results**

Table 1. Mann Whitney-U Test results based on NAQ and COS scores of physical education and sports teachers in terms of “gender”

Gender			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
NAQ	Mobbing	Male	213	136,58	29091,00	6300,000	0,000**
		Female	88	185,91	16360,00		
Organizational Commitment	Compliance	Male	213	149,17	31773,00	8982,000	0,569
		Female	88	155,43	13678,00		
	Identification	Male	213	157,15	33472,50	8062,500	0,056
		Female	88	136,12	11978,50		
Internalization	Male	213	165,36	35221,50	6313,500	0,000**	
	Female	88	116,24	10229,50			

\* $P < 0.05$

As the result of statistical analyses conducted on physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of gender, a significant difference was found between mobbing and the sub-scale of internalization.

Table 2. Mann Whitney-U Test results based on NAQ and COS scores of physical education and sports teachers in terms of “civil status”

Civil Status			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	U	P
NAQ	Mobbing	Married	217	147,45	31997,50	8344,500	0,324
		Single	84	158,46	13152,50		
Organizational Commitment	Compliance	Married	217	147,28	31959,50	8306,500	0,297
		Single	84	158,92	13190,50		
	Identification	Married	217	158,61	34417,50	7246,500	0,009**
		Single	84	129,31	10732,50		
	Internalization	Married	217	154,05	33428,00	8236,000	0,251
		Single	84	141,23	11722,00		

\*P<0.05

As the result of statistical analyses conducted on physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of civil status, significant differences were found in the sub-scale of identification.

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis-H Test results based on NAQ and COS scores of physical education and sports teachers in terms of “service period”

Service Period			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	X <sup>2</sup>	P
NAQ	Mobbing	<-5	78	160,90	3	2,127	,546
		6-10	76	154,40			
		11-15	74	145,24			
		>-16	73	142,72			
Organizational Commitment	Compliance	<-5	78	155,43	3	,295	,961
		6-10	76	150,59			
		11-15	74	148,75			
	Identification	>-16	73	148,97	3	8,837	,032**
		<-5	78	129,54			
		6-10	76	149,89			
Organizational Commitment	Internalization	11-15	74	154,89	3	,557	,906
		>-16	73	171,14			
		<-5	78	150,42			
		6-10	76	154,22			
		11-15	74	145,07			
		>-16	73	154,28			

\*P<0.05

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of service period, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

Table 4. Kruskal Wallis-H Test results based on NAQ and COS scores of physical education and sports teachers in terms of “age groups”

Age Groups			N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	X <sup>2</sup>	P
NAQ	Mobbing	<-30	92	152,88	3	3,569	,312
		31-35	70	163,94			
		36-40	74	149,60			
		>-41	65	135,99			
Organizational Commitment	Compliance	<-30	92	154,58	3	,834	,841
		31-35	70	142,85			
		36-40	74	153,11			
	Identification	>-41	65	152,30	3	7,886	,048*
		<-30	92	132,01			
		31-35	70	149,07			

	36-40	74	162,55			
	>-41	65	166,81			
	<-30	92	150,47			
Internalization	31-35	70	156,36	3	,416	,937
	36-40	74	147,19			
	>-41	65	150,32			

\*P<0.05

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of age group, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis-H Test results based on NAQ and COS scores of physical education and sports teachers in terms of “course load”

	Course Load	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	X <sup>2</sup>	P
NAQ	Mobbing	16-22	95	147,24	2	,282
		23-26	114	151,94		
		27-30	92	153,71		
Organizational Commitment	Compliance	16-22	95	158,49	2	1,110
		23-26	114	146,06		
		27-30	92	149,39		
	Identification	16-22	95	164,49	2	11,299
		23-26	114	160,12		
		27-30	92	125,77		
Internalization	16-22	95	150,54	2	2,496	
	23-26	114	159,79			
	27-30	92	140,58			

\*P<0.05

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of course load, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

### Discussion

Statistical findings concerning mobbing behaviors that physical education and sports teachers had been exposed to in school environment and their level of organizational commitment in terms of socio-demographic characteristics were discussed below.

Considering Table 1 that shows mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of gender, female teachers were found to be exposed to mobbing behaviors more frequently than the males. These findings are thought to be resulted from female teachers’ perceptions about the behaviors. In other words, female teachers are said to be more sensitive and emotional about behaviors of their colleagues than the males. Similarly, Chappell and Di Martino (1999), Salin (2001), and Di Pasquale (2002) asserted that gender has an impact on the risk of exposure to mobbing, and females are more likely to be exposed to mobbing than males. However, male teachers were found to be exposed to psychological violence more than the females in the research of Alkan (2011) conducted on physical education and sports teachers, and in the research of Cemaloglu and Erturk (2007) conducted on teachers from different branches. Considering organizational commitment levels of teachers in Table 1, on the other hand, female teachers were found to have a lower level of internalization than the males. The findings of the researches of Zeyrek (2008), Balay (2000b), Sezer (2005) and Zeren (2007) concerning organizational commitment levels of teachers are similar to the findings of this paper and support this research.

Considering Table 2 that shows mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of civil status, the variable civil status was found ineffective in terms of exposure to mobbing. In short, it is likely to say that level of social development of physical education and sports teachers is higher than teachers in other branches, and thus, their mobbing perception is not affected by their civil status. In their researches concerning teachers, Koç and Bulut (2009), Ocağ (2008), Aksahin (2012), and Cemaloglu (2007b) also set forth that mobbing perceptions of teachers do not differ based on their civil status. Considering organizational commitment levels of teachers in Table 2, on the other hand, the single teachers were found to have a lower level of identification with the organization than the married ones. In their research, Mohamed and Shaw (1999) also

found that single teachers had a lower level of identification than the married ones. These findings are parallel to the findings of this research. Güçlü (2006), Özcan (2008) and Kurşunoğlu et al. (2010), on the other hand, asserted that civil status is not an important variable for organizational commitment.

Considering Table 3 that shows mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of service period, the variable service period was found ineffective in terms of exposure to mobbing. It is likely to be resulted from that physical education and sports teachers are branch teachers and that there are not so many teachers from the same branch in the same school. The research of Alkan (2011) conducted on physical education teachers, and the researches of Bucuklar (2009) and Mammadov (2010) conducted on teachers have similar findings to this research. Considering the findings concerning organizational commitment sub-scales in terms of age and service period shown in the Table 3 and 4, a significant difference is seen in the sub-scale of identification. The researches of Uygur (2010), Zeyrek (2008), Allen-Meyer (1993) and Tolunay (2010) have similar findings to this research in terms of age and service period. However, in the researches of Demirsoy (2009), Sezer (2005), Zaman (2006) and Erdaş (2009) concerning teachers, the sub-scale of identification was determined not to cause any difference in terms of age and service period.

Considering Table 4 that shows mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of age, no significant difference was determined. In other words, physical education and sports teachers from different age groups were found to have similar levels of mobbing perceptions. Several researches conducted on teachers were found to have similar findings to this research. The age factor was determined to be an insignificant determinant of mobbing perceptions of teachers in the research of Alkan (2011) conducted on physical education and sports teachers, of Gökçe Toker (2006) conducted on teachers and managers, of Koç and Bulut (2009) conducted on secondary school teachers, and of Mammadov (2010) conducted on teachers served in Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Considering Table 5 that shows mobbing perceptions of physical education and sports teachers in terms of course load, it was determined that having an intensive or light course load does not make any difference in mobbing perceptions. However, Özen (2009) asserted the more intensive the course load of a guidance teacher is, the more common the mobbing behavior of the same person becomes. In his research conducted on managers and teachers of vocational high schools, Akkar (2010) set forth that course load played a role in mobbing behaviors of teachers in terms of sub-scales of mobbing. When course load of physical education and sports teachers is examined in terms of the sub-scales of the organizational commitment scale, namely compliance, identification and internalization, physical education and sports teachers who had a more intensive course load were found to have a lower level of identification with the organization. Tugrul and Çelik (2002) emphasized that intensive course load on an individual might increase his level of burnout; while Ardic and Polatci (2008) asserted in their research conducted on academicians that academicians with an intensive course load might suffer desensitization within the organization.

## Conclusion

As the result of statistical analyses conducted on physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of gender, a significant difference was found between mobbing and the sub-scale of internalization.

As the result of statistical analyses conducted on physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of civil status, significant differences were found in the sub-scale of identification.

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of service period, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of age group, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

Considering the scores of physical education and sports teachers concerning mobbing and the organizational commitment sub-scales of compliance, identification and internalization in terms of course load, it was determined that the teachers could not identify with the organization in the sub-scale of identification.

## Recommendations

In-service training activities raising awareness within the organization should be focused on for enhancing the quality of school atmosphere and protecting employees against potential psychological abuses and mobbing.

Social activities may be organized by school managers for improving the communication in school environment and strengthening the organizational commitment and emphatic links.

The performance of teachers may be increased by improving the working status of them and by keeping their workload at a bearable level.

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