

WCES 2012

Behaviors perceived as mobbing by the instructors assigned in special education institutions

Aydin Aydan ^{a 1}, Otrar Mustafa ^b, Sahsuvaroglu, Tuna ^c

^aMarmara University, İstanbul, 34722, TURKEY

^bMarmara University, İstanbul, 34722, TURKEY

^cMarmara University, İstanbul, 34722, TURKEY

Abstract

The objective of present research is to detect the behaviors perceived as mobbing by the instructors assigned in special education institutions. 280 instructors collectively constitute the sampling of research. In this study a survey that exhibits demographic features of the mobbing victims and mobbing actors in addition to “Mobbing Behaviors Amongst Primary Education Institutions” survey have been used. Research findings have manifested that a majority of people (67,5%) exhibiting mobbing behaviors are the managers; most of them (67,5%) are between ages 23–35 and mobbing behaviors are less frequently observed parallel to the increase in age; between ages 36–48 the ratio is (22,9%) while the ratio falls to (%9,6) for age 49 and above). It has also been detected that individuals who commonly perform mobbing behaviors (61,1%) are the ones that have been working in the same institution for less than 5 years.

Key Words: Mobbing, special education

1. Introduction

Education makes it possible to adjust the child into his/her own habitat and meet the expectations demanded from him/her. In cases when the differences in the child’s development are behind the track, special education comes to the fore. Special education differs from general education with respect to the materials and method employed in addition to personalized techniques used (Ataman 2009). In other terms, special education involves a process that prioritizes the children with special needs led by specially trained instructors within the flow of special programs and instructional materials. Special instructors shoulder the greatest responsibility in this process. It is feasible to assume that compared to the rest of instructors, special education teachers bear a remarkably greater task. This hardship may be attributed to physical conditions of special education institutions, expectations of parents and also behavioral problems of kids. The instructors working under such conditions are likely to perform more intolerant, pushing and aggressive acts towards one another due to the harsh working conditions. In short, they may be inclined to mobbing behaviors. The recent educational studies conducted within Turkey (Toker, 2006; Onbaş, 2007; Urasoğlu, Bulut 2007; Yıldırım, 2008; Ocak, 2008; Aydın, 2009; Abay, 2009; Şimşek and Ertek, 2009, Otrar and Özen, 2009; Yıldırım, 2010) also point to the fact that mobbing has reached to alarming levels. Analysis of mobbing

¹ Corresponding Aydan AYDIN. Tel.: +9-0532-482-1598
E-mail address: aydanaydin@marmara.edu.tr

behaviors of the special education instructors with respect to several variables constitutes the main problem of this research. The objective of current study is detecting demographic features and behaviors perceived as mobbing by the instructors assigned in special education institutions.

Having derived from infinitive verb “mob”, the word “mobbing” is defined as psychological violence, emotional siege, harassment, molestation or hallowing (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2005). Heinemann describes the violent acts of small groups consisting of children towards a lonely and weak child with the concept “mobbing”. Likewise, Leymann at the onset of eighties used the same concept to identify long-term hostilities and violence amongst co-workers (Tinaz, 2008). Leymann (1990) notes that hostile and unethical communication directed in a systematic way by one or a few individuals mainly towards one individual is psychological terror or mobbing. This situation is expected to last each repeating day or minimum for a six-month period. Mobbing is known to be the actions directed to certain people as systematic emotional abuse and harassment. Regardless of the fact that the problems of victims have long been recognized, it was only after 1992 that tangible efforts in the diagnosis and appropriate treatment methods for this long-existing problem have come to surface (Groeblichhoff & Becker, 1996).

Davenport & Schwartz & Eliot (2003) describe mobbing concept as “emotional attack”. Zapf, Knorz and Kulla (1996) in their research have established a meaningful relationship between mobbing and unfavorable working conditions and social life. Toker Gökçe (2009) explains mobbing at work as systematic, daily and emotionally damaging actions by one or a few people towards one target person or a few people rarely. According to Otrar & Özen (2009) in corporations where mobbing is practiced consciously or unconsciously it is quite likely that employees shall face job dissatisfaction, motivation loss, unproductivity not to mention a number of physiological disorders. In particular the kind of mobbing behaviors witnessed in educational institutes adversely impact teachers’ performance. Sloan and his colleagues (2010) state that victims of mobbing experience adverse physiological, psychological and emotional impacts. Jennifer, Cowie and Ananiadou (2003) list the relevant mobbing behaviors such: Threatening professional status and personality of employees, excluding from social environments, irrational loads of work, unpredictable acts and physical damages. All these experiences leave intolerable negative effects on victims. These effects can be visualized in preventing social communication of the victim, distancing the victim from other employees by affecting his/her social relations, diminishing self-esteem, burdening the victim with futile tasks and assigning the victim with life-threatening duties that disorder physiological health (Leymann, 1996). They may all result in labeling the victim, social isolation, hopelessness and inclination towards psychosomatic/psychiatric disorders (Leymann, 1990). Mobbing is not only influential on the psychology and psychological trauma of the victim but on his/her family as well (Sperry & Duffy, 2009). Mobbing may also result from lack of cooperation or various conflicts that prevent flow of information (Cemaloğlu, 2007). Zapf, Knorz and Kulla (1996)’s research findings suggest that when the managers render social support there is decline in mobbing, yelling at the victim, criticisms and verbal attacks; when mobbing victim receives social support of colleagues then the victim is socially alienated in a lower level and faces less mocking of his/her private life. Behaviors of bullying and mobbing are commonly and more frequently experienced in different ways in all organizations including social services and healthcare and educational institutions particularly (Sloan et al., 2010) (Vickers, 2010).

2. Method

In present research aiming to manifest perceived behaviors of mobbing by the instructors in special education institutions, general scanning model has been employed. General scanning models are the kind of scanning patterns that are conducted on the whole of universe or a group, sample or sampling from the universe to reach a general judgment about a multi-component universe (Karasar, 2006). Through random cluster sampling method 15 institutions have been selected and 280 instructors employed in these institutions have formed sampling group. In the research a survey has been conducted to detect the demographic features of the victims and actors of mobbing and in order to identify mobbing behaviors Ertürk’s survey (2005) “Mobbing Behaviors Amidst the Employees in Primary Education Institutions” has been adapted for reuse.

Table 1. Constant criticism on your private life

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	236	84,3	84,3	84,3
Rarely	31	11,1	11,1	95,4

Occasionally	9	3,2	3,2	98,6
Usually	2	,7	,7	99,3
Always	2	,7	,7	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 2. Non-appreciation and devaluing of your performance

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	144	51,4	51,4	51,4
Rarely	60	21,4	21,4	72,9
Occasionally	35	12,5	12,5	85,4
Usually	29	10,4	10,4	95,7
Always	12	4,3	4,3	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 3. Constant pressure on your workload

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	112	40,0	40,0	40,0
Rarely	52	18,6	18,6	58,6
Occasionally	45	16,1	16,1	74,6
Usually	51	18,2	18,2	92,9
Always	20	7,1	7,1	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 4. Depriving your rights of communicating with others

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	245	87,5	87,5	87,5
Rarely	23	8,2	8,2	95,7
Occasionally	9	3,2	3,2	98,9
Usually	2	,7	,7	99,6
Always	1	,4	,4	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 5. Ignoring and treating you as nonexistent

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	229	81,8	81,8	81,8
Rarely	30	10,7	10,7	92,5
Occasionally	16	5,7	5,7	98,2
Usually	3	1,1	1,1	99,3
Always	2	,7	,7	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 6. Mocking your mimics, gestures, posture, voice

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	250	89,3	89,3	89,3
Rarely	20	7,1	7,1	96,4
Occasionally	8	2,9	2,9	99,3
Usually	2	,7	,7	100,0
Always	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 7. Treating as if you needed psychiatric treatment

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	258	92,1	92,1	92,1
Rarely	12	4,3	4,3	96,4
Occasionally	5	1,8	1,8	98,2
Usually	2	,7	,7	98,9

Always	3	1,1	1,1	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 8. Forcing you to do a task damaging your self esteem

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	233	83,2	83,2	83,2
Rarely	27	9,6	9,6	92,9
Occasionally	13	4,6	4,6	97,5
Usually	3	1,1	1,1	98,6
Always	4	1,4	1,4	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 9. Unfair evaluation of your efforts and accomplishments

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	190	67,9	67,9	67,9
Rarely	44	15,7	15,7	83,6
Occasionally	26	9,3	9,3	92,9
Usually	10	3,6	3,6	96,4
Always	10	3,6	3,6	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 10. Failure to evaluate you under the same criteria applied to other colleagues

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	198	70,7	70,7	70,7
Rarely	35	12,5	12,5	83,2
Occasionally	21	7,5	7,5	90,7
Usually	14	5,0	5,0	95,7
Always	12	4,3	4,3	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 11. Demeaning your success

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	167	59,6	59,6	59,6
Rarely	61	21,8	21,8	81,4
Occasionally	30	10,7	10,7	92,1
Usually	13	4,6	4,6	96,8
Always	9	3,2	3,2	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 12. Warning on accounts of invalid excuses

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	230	82,1	82,1	82,1
Rarely	27	9,6	9,6	91,8
Occasionally	16	5,7	5,7	97,5
Usually	5	1,8	1,8	99,3
Always	2	,7	,7	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 13. Putting you in a target position aimed by co-workers

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	228	81,4	81,4	81,4
Rarely	27	9,6	9,6	91,1
Occasionally	18	6,4	6,4	97,5
Usually	5	1,8	1,8	99,3
Always	2	,7	,7	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 14. Maximizing your responsibilities yet minimizing your authority

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	227	81,1	81,1	81,1
Rarely	25	8,9	8,9	90,0
Occasionally	11	3,9	3,9	93,9
Usually	13	4,6	4,6	98,6
Always	4	1,4	1,4	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

Table 15. The level of victimization exposed at workplace during the last 6 months

Groups	<i>f</i>	%	% _{gec}	% _{yig}
Never	209	74,6	74,6	74,6
Rarely	27	9,6	9,6	84,3
Occasionally	22	7,9	7,9	92,1
Usually	13	4,6	4,6	96,8
Always	9	3,2	3,2	100,0
Total	280	100,0	100,0	

3. Discussion

Mobbing behaviors mostly originate from worklife related processes. For instance, constant increase in work loads, lack of appreciating job performance, unfair valuation of the efforts and performance, failure to apply the same evaluation criteria with the other employees, attempts to undervalue success, maximizing the responsibility yet minimizing the authority etc. are the most frequently encountered mobbing behaviors. This is parallel to the finding that a majority of (67,5%) mobbing actors are managers. In this case, mobbing behaviors are commonly witnessed through a channel from manager to employee and it is likely to stem from the fact that managers may be exercising their authoritative power against the benefit of employees. In another saying in school hierarchy mobbing is vertical in most cases. On the other hand mobbing behaviors aimed at private life or personal characteristics are comparatively less frequent. According to Şimşek, Ertek (2009) the objective is the same regardless of the type of mobbing action; to unsettle self-confidence, demeaning one's success and driving to depression which results in job alienation. Besides, the obtained findings hereby draw a parallel to the findings of Şimşek, Ertek (2009). On the other hand it has been witnessed that work-related mobbing behaviors directed in particular by school principals adversely impact teachers' performance, respect of teachers to the particular educational institution as well as their own self confidence (Yıldırım, 2010). Based on research findings it can reasonably be argued that there is urgency to inform and train directors and teachers on mobbing, to conduct awareness and concern raising events, to make amendments in existing laws and regulations to deal with mobbing behaviors as well (Aydın, 2009). It is remarkable that majority of individuals 67,5% known to be victim actors are between ages 23-35 and parallel to the rise in age there is downfall in mobbing behaviors (22,9% between ages 36-48, 9,6% for age 49 and above). These findings all demonstrate that young employees are more inclined to exhibit mobbing behaviors which brings to mind that young groups of employees may be engaged in bullying behaviors just to make an appearance in work environment. However when this finding is analyzed jointly with the finding that mobbing behaviors are more prevalent amongst managers, it seems that since young age is related to "ineffective exercise of authority and the difficulty to exercise power" young employees are inevitably pushed towards uncontrolled exercise of power. The insufficiency in corporate experience and management position may also be igniting the occurrence of this situation. This finding and explanation holds equally valid for professional seniority. The most common actors (61,1%) of mobbing are the ones employed in the same institution for less than 5 years which is parallel to Urasoğlu, Bulut (2007)'s findings.

References

- Abay, A. (2009). An Analysis of the Relationship between Perceptions of Mobbing and Social Support of Primary Education Teachers Maltepe University Institute of Social Sciences
- Ataman, A. (2009). Introduction to Special Education. Ankara: Gündüz Press
- Aydın, Ö.B. (2009) The Levels of Mobbing Exposed to Secondary Education School Principals and Teachers Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University Institute of Social Sciences
- Cemaloğlu, N. (2007). "Unavoidable Problem of Organizations: Mobbing". Turkish World Social Sciences Journal 42: 111-126.
- Davenport, N. & Schwartz, R.D. & Elliott, G.P. (2003). Mobbing: Emotional Harassment at Workplace (Trans.: O.C.Önersoy). İstanbul: Sistem.
- Ertürk, A. (2005) Mobbing Behaviors Exposed to Teachers and School Principals at Workplace Master' Thesis Gazi University Institute of Educational Sciences. Ankara.

- Groeblinghoff, D. & Becker, M. (1996). Case Study of Mobbing and the Clinical Treatment of Mobbing Victims *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol.5 (2) 277-294
- Jennifer, D. & Cowie, H & Ananiadou, K. (2003). "Perception and Experience of Workplace Bullying in Five Different Working Populations", *Aggressive Behavior*, v:2, 489-496.
- Karasar, N. (2006). *Scientific Research Method*. İstanbul: Nobel Publishing House.
- Leymann, H. (1990) Mobbing and Psychological Terror at Workplaces. *Violence and Victims*, Vol.5 No.2 119–126.
- Leymann, H. (1996) The Content and Development of Mobbing at Work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. Vol.5 (2) 165-184
- Ocak, S. (2008). *Mobbing Perceptions of Teachers (City of Edirne Case Study Trakya University Institute of Social Sciences Unpublished Master's Thesis*
- Onlaş, N. (2007) *A Research on Primary Education Teachers' Views on Mobbing in Educational Institutes*. Harran University Institute of Social Sciences Unpublished Master's Thesis
- Otrar, M. & Özen, B. (2009). "Perceived Behaviors of Mobbing by Guidance Teachers". *Business Ethics Journal*. Vol. 2, Issue 3, pp.:97-121.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. (2005). Oxford University Pres.
- Sloan, L. M & Matyók, T. & Schmitz, C. L. & Lester Short, G. F. (2010) A Story to Tell: Bullying and Mobbing in the Workplace *International Journal of Business and Social Science* Vol. 1 No. 3; December 2010; pp.87-97
- Sperry, L. & Duffy, M. (2009). *Workplace Mobbing: Family Dynamics and Therapeutic Considerations*, 37 AM. J. Family Therapy. 433, 433–36
- Şimşek Ertek, S. (2009) *A Study on Mobbing Victimized Instructors Beykent University Institute of Social Sciences Unpublished Master's Thesis*.
- Tınaz, P. & Bayram, F. & Ergin, H. (2008). *Psychology of Working and With its Legal Context, Mobbing at Workplace*. Beta: İstanbul.
- Toker Gökçe, A. (2009) *Mobbing: Mobbing at Workplace Conceptual Framework*. *Science, Education and Opinion Journal*. Vol. 9.(2)
- Toker, A. 2006, *Mobbing at Workplace: A Research Covering Private and Public Primary Education Institutions' Teachers and Directors*, Ankara University Educational Sciences Institute Department of Educational Sciences, Published Master's Thesis, Ankara
- Urasoğlu Bulut, H. (2007) *The Levels of Mobbing amongst Secondary Education Teachers Niğde University Social Sciences Institute*. Unpublished Master's Thesis
- Vickers, M.H.(2010). *Introduction-Bullying, Mobbing, and Violence in Public Service Workplaces The Shifting Sands of "Acceptable" Violence"* *Administrative Theory & Praxis*. Volume 32, No. 1 (7- 24) 10.2753/ATP1084-1806320101
- Yıldırım, İ. (2010). *The Levels of Exposure to Mobbing by School Principals towards Primary Education Class Teachers (city of Kırıkkale Sample) Kırıkkale University Institute of Social Sciences*
- Yıldırım, T. (2008). *Mobbing and its Effects on the Relationship between Primary Education Teachers–Principals Yeditepe University Institute of Social Sciences Unpublished Master's Thesis*.
- Zapf, D. & Knorz, C. & Kulla, M. (1996): *On The Relationship Between Mobbing Factors and Job Content, Social Work Environment and Health Outcomes*. In: Zapf & Leymann (Eds.): *Mobbing and Victimization at Work*. A Special Issue of the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*. 2.