



Mobbing Behaviour: Victims and the Affected*

Abbas ERTÜRK^a

Gazi University

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to identify the level of mobbing behaviour faced by teachers and managers working in primary schools, their responses to such behaviour and the difference in these responses according to the gender variable. The sample of the research consists of a total of 1,316 teachers and managers including 691 men and 625 women from 21 provinces of Turkey. The data collection instrument for the research was prepared by the researcher (except for the NAQ scale). The NAQ scale was used to identify the level of mobbing behaviour faced by teachers and managers. The frequency, cross-tab, chi-square, Varimax factor reversal and t-test techniques were used in the research. The results were tested at the level of $p < .05$. Following the research, it was found that 4.1 % of the teachers and managers working in primary schools faced mobbing behaviour every day and that the male teachers and managers encounter mobbing more than the female teachers and managers. In addition, it was revealed that two thirds of the men and one third of the women perceived mobbing behaviour as normal.

Key Words

Mobbing Behaviour, Responses to Mobbing, Roles in Mobbing Behaviour.

The workforce is one of the most important resources for organizations, because it stands at the head of the many factors affecting organizational efficiency. Özdemir and Muradova (2008, p. 152) state that the workforce has a greater effect on efficiency than other factors do. According to Gümüş (1995, p. 119), the lack of effective communication leads to conflicts among employees. If these con-

flicts remain uncontrolled and unsolved, they will grow and damage the organization. A negative communication that occurs among employees will cause first these employees to experience stress and then those who are in social contact with them to experience stress, their efficiency to fall, and the employees to make mistakes. Scholars refer to this behavioural problem which occurs among employees and which causes the inefficiency of both the employees and the organization as "Mobbing Behaviour".

Leymann (1984) defines mobbing behaviour as "psychological violence" or "psycho-terror" applied by one or several persons against another person or other persons in a systematic, hostile and unethical manner (cited in Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2003, pp. 4-5). Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002, p. 397) define emotional mobbing behaviour as recurring negative acts such as all types of maltreatment, accusation, insinuation and gossip. Such behaviour occurs also in educational institutions (Cemaloğlu,

* The data collected for the doctoral thesis with the title "A Study of Emotional Mobbing Behaviour Against Teachers and Managers Working in Primary Schools" prepared by Abbas ERTÜRK at the Institute of Educational Sciences, Gazi University, have been used in this research.

^a Abbas ERTÜRK, Ph.D., has a doctoral degree in Education Management. His work includes mobbing, organizational power, chaos theory and the statistics knowledge adequacy of researchers. *Correspondence:* Gazi University, Education Faculty, 06500 Teknik okullar, Ankara/Turkey. E-mail: abbasertu@gmail.com.

2007a, p. 798). In a survey conducted in six provinces, Urasoğlu (2007, p. 85) found that 50 % of teachers suffered mobbing behaviour against their quality of life.

There are many research studies carried out to investigate the difference of employees in suffering mobbing behaviour by gender. These research studies have contradictory results. In most of the studies made concerning employees in the area of education in Turkey, no difference has been identified between male and female teachers in terms of the frequency of facing mobbing behaviour (Cemaloğlu, 2007a, p. 798; Deniz & Ünsal, 2010, p. 39; Gökçe & Oğuz, 2009, p. 59; Karyağdı, 2007, p. 94). In certain other studies, however, it has been found that men face mobbing behaviour more than women do (Cemaloğlu & Ertürk, 2007, p. 352). In addition, a research study conducted in public and private primary schools has found that men and women face different types of mobbing behaviour. In that study, it has been found that female teachers face mobbing behaviour in social relations and professional matters while male teachers face such behaviour in personal matters and in terms of violence (Gökçe, 2005, p. 5).

Research studies conducted in different organizations abroad have yielded different results. In most of those studies, no significant difference has been found between women and men in terms of facing mobbing (Hansen et al., 2006, p. 70; Hecker, 2007, p. 441; Rayner, 1997, p. 201; Vartia, 1996, p. 203). However, certain studies, although few in number, have found that the gender difference is an important variable in facing mobbing behaviour. According to those studies, women face mobbing behaviour more than men do (Arpacioğlu, 2003; Björkqvist, Österman, & Back, 1994, p. 177; Namie, 2003, p. 2).

This research was carried out in order to clarify these contradictory results regarding the gender variable. This research was intended to compare the levels of mobbing behaviour effectively faced by women and men and their perceptions of and responses to such behaviour.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to identify whether there is any difference in terms of gender in mobbing behaviour faced by teachers and managers working in primary schools and in their responses to such behaviour. For this purpose, answers were sought to the following questions:

1) What is the level of incidence of the mobbing behaviour that takes place in primary schools? 2) Is there a significant difference between male and female teachers in suffering mobbing behaviour that takes place in primary schools? 3) What is the distribution of roles by gender in mobbing behaviour that takes place in primary schools? 4) How do victims respond to mobbing behaviour that takes place in primary schools? 5) How do witnesses respond to mobbing behaviour that takes place in primary schools?

Method

Research Model

This research has been conducted in the survey model in the framework of quantitative research. According to Karasar (1998, p. 77), the survey model is a research approach aiming to describe a past or present situation.

Universe and Sample

The universe of the research consist of 422,264 teachers and 28,536 managers working in 33,227 primary schools located in the seven geographical regions of Turkey and bound to the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2008). A sub-universe was taken from within this universe. In taking the sub-universe, consideration was given to the Social, Cultural and Economic Development Ranking of Provinces published by the State Planning Organization (DPT, 2003). Three provinces from each geographical region at the top, middle, and bottom of socio-economic development ranking were included in the sub-universe.

The school rate of each province across Turkey was found. To obtain a sufficient sample size for the universe of Turkey, the rate for each province was multiplied by 8 and the result rounded off. In this way, the number of sample units (schools) to be taken from each province was determined. After the number of schools was determined, schools were selected from each province using the random method. According to Balcı (2001, p. 95), all units have an equal chance of entering the sample under this method.

Six teachers from each school selected through the method above were included in the research, thus making up a total of 1,482 teachers. Six questionnaires were sent to each school, requesting for them to be answered by 4 classroom teachers, 2 branch teachers and 1 manager. The procedures of sending

and collecting the questionnaires were carried out by the MEB-EARGED (Education Research and Development Office) Research Branch. As a result, the questionnaire return rate was 93.5%.

Development of the Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument comprises four parts. The first part asked the personal details of the participants. The second part used the "Negative Acts Questionnaire NAQ" scale to measure the frequency of mobbing behaviour. For this scale, the necessary permission was obtained from the Bergen Bullying Research Group at the Bergen University in Norway. The scale was adapted by Cemaloğlu (2007b) to Turkish. In the factor analysis study made by Cemaloğlu, it was observed that the scale items gathered under a single factor and it was found that the variance rate explained by it was 71 %, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .94 and the factor load values of the questionnaire items ranged between 0.59 and 0.84 (Cemaloğlu, 2007b, p. 81). The third part asked the roles of the participants in behaviour that took place. The fourth part asked the responses by the participants to behaviour that took place. The data collection instrument prepared was corrected in line with expert opinions and a pilot application was administrated to 130 teachers at 11 primary schools in the province of Ankara.

With the data obtained from the pilot application, a factor analysis and reliability tests were performed, and the questionnaire was finalized according to those tests. The NAQ scale has 22 items. The Varimax factor reversal analysis was used to determine the factors of the scale independent of each other and the sub-items contained by those factors. When the results of the analysis were examined, it was observed that three items had a factor load value below 0.35. For this reason, it was considered appropriate to remove those items from the scale. At the end of the factor analysis, it was observed that the NAQ items gathered under a single factor, the items had a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .87 and the total item correlation ranged between .36 and .69.

Data Analysis

The frequency (f), percentage (%), mean, standard deviation, cross-tab, chi-square and t-test techniques were used to analyze the data. The results were tested at the level of $p < .05$.

Results

The most common types of behaviour at primary schools are observed to be "Making rumours and gossip about the individual" ($\bar{x}=1.94$), "Ignoring or excluding the individual" ($\bar{x}=1.79$) and "Disregarding the individual's opinions, ideas and proposals" ($\bar{x}=1.68$). In addition, it has been found that those who give the answer "every day" concerning the frequency of facing mobbing behaviour range between 0.7 and 4.1.

It is observed that on the NAQ scale, male teachers and female teachers in primary schools are victims of mobbing behaviour at the level of $\bar{x}=1.51$ and $\bar{x}=1.44$, respectively. When the results of the t-test are examined, a significant difference [$t_{(1197)}=2.28$, $p < .05$] is found between the experience of facing mobbing behaviour and the gender of teachers working in primary schools.

The participants were asked what their roles were in behaviour that took place. When the distribution of roles by gender is examined, it appears that 29.0 % of the men and 36.2 % of the women think that they are victims of mobbing. The result of the chi-square test indicates that this difference is significant ($p=.010$). In other words, female teachers and managers regard themselves in the role of victim more than male teachers and managers do.

The participants were also asked what their responses were to behaviour that took place. Here, those who gave the answer "I thought it was something normal and did not do anything" out of the 10 different types of response were examined for the gender variable. Of the victims, 58.7 % are men and 41.3 % women. In addition, when the witnesses of mobbing behaviour were examined according to their gender, it was noted that 77.7 % of them were men and 22.2 % women. In other words, the men who consider mobbing behaviour to be normal behaviour "that can happen in the workplace" represent a much higher proportion than the women.

Discussion

This study has shown that the most common types of behaviour faced by teachers and managers working in primary schools are "Making rumours and gossip about the individual", "Ignoring or excluding the individual" and "Disregarding the individual's opinions, ideas and proposals". It has been found that 4.1 % of teachers and managers working in primary schools face mobbing behaviour "every day". This rate is close to rates found in research

studies conducted at different institutions and organizations in Europe. The research made by Leymann (1996, p. 169) in Sweden finds that 3.5 % of the working population are victims of mobbing. In addition, the research made by Niedl (1996, p. 246) in Switzerland shows that 3.5 % of employees are victims of mobbing.

The NAQ scale applied has shown that men face mobbing behaviour more than women do. However, on the scale concerning the distribution of roles, it is noted that women regard themselves as victims more than men do. These two findings, which at first sight appear contradictory, are clarified by the difference in the responses of men and women to mobbing behaviour, which is another finding of the study.

Two thirds of the men and one third of the women perceive mobbing behaviour as normal. This difference of gender in terms of response to mobbing behaviour also indicates the viewpoints and perceptions of individuals concerning the phenomenon. In this context, men effectively face mobbing behaviour more than women do. However, women regard themselves as victims more than men do. The reason for this is that men consider such behaviour to be something normal which can happen in the workplace while women find it unacceptable. This indicates that although women face mobbing less than men do, they are affected by such behaviour and feel uneasy about it more in comparison with men.

It may be argued that this difference in the responses of women and men to mobbing behaviour is due to the difference in their upbringing. In Turkish society, boys are brought up differently from girls. Parents bring up their sons in a manner that will accustom them to violence or at least to self-defence. From the age of early childhood, notions such as fighting and war are portrayed to boys like a game, and boys willingly play these games since they are already prone to them. In the later phases of childhood, boys are interested more in the types of toys such as swords, rifles and tanks. Researchers state that such toys awaken in children the idea that violence is natural (Güner, 1988, p. 35-36; Öztürk, 2001, p. 60; Poyraz, 1999, p. 61). It has also been stated by many researchers that boys use violence more than girls do (Baldry & Farrington, 1999, p. 424; Kartal & Bilgin, 2008, p. 494; WHO, 2004, p. 205). Since boys are raised with elements that endorse bullying and violence, they later become individuals who accept violence. Girls stay further away from violence since they grow up more harmoniously (Pişkin, 2005).

In this context, the environments in which boys find themselves are environments that contain more violence. For this reason, while growing up, they witness and face more violence than girls do. Therefore, the level of violence that seems normal to men is higher than the level of violence that seems normal to women. This is also applicable to emotional violence (mobbing) behaviour that occurs in the workplace. For this reason, men generally accept violent behaviour in the workplace as more usual than women do.

References/Kaynakça

- Arpacioğlu, G. (2003). İşyerindeki stresin gizli kaynağı: Zorbalık ve duygusal taciz. www.hrdergi.com adresinden 03.12.2008 tarihinde edinilmiştir.
- Balcı, A. (2001). *Sosyal bilimlerde araştırma* (3. bs.). Ankara: Pegem A Yayınları.
- Baldry, A. C., & Farrington, D. P. (1999). Types of bullying among Italian school children. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22, 423-426.
- Björkqvist, K., Österman, K., & Back, H. M. (1994). Aggression among university employees. *Aggressive Behavior*, 20 (3), 173-184.
- Cemaloğlu, N. (2007a). The exposure of primary school teachers to bullying: An analysis of various variables. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 35 (6), 789-802.
- Cemaloğlu, N. (2007b). Okul yöneticilerinin liderlik stilleri ile yıldırma arasındaki ilişki. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 33, 77-87.
- Cemaloğlu, N. ve Ertürk, A. (2007). Öğretmenlerin maruz kaldığı yıldırma eylemlerinin cinsiyet yönünden incelenmesi. *Türk eğitim bilimleri dergisi*, 5 (2) 345-365.
- Davenport, N., Schwartz R. D. ve Elliott G. P. (2003). *Mobbing: İşyerinde duygusal taciz* (çev. O. C. Önerotay). İstanbul: Sistem Yayıncılık (Orijinal eser 1998'de yayımlandı).
- Deniz, D. ve Ünsal, P. (2010). İşyerinde yıldırma ugramada dışadönük ve nevrotik kişilik yapıları ile cinsiyetin rolü. "İŞ, GÜÇ" Endüstri İlişkileri ve İnsan Kaynakları Dergisi, 12 (1). <http://www.isguc.org/?p=makale&id=385&cilt=12&sayi=1&yil=2010> adresinden 26.01.2010 tarihinde edinilmiştir.
- Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DTP). (2003). İllere göre sosyo-ekonomik gelişmişlik sıralaması. <http://www.dpt.gov.tr/bgyu/seg/iller2003.html>. adresinden 05.06.08 tarihinde edinilmiştir.
- Gökçe, A. T. (2005). *İş yerinde incinme: Özel ve resmi ilköğretim okulu öğretmen ve yöneticileri üzerinde yapılan bir araştırma*. Yayımlanmamış doktora tezi, Ankara Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Ankara.
- Gökçe, A. T. ve Oğuz, E. (2009, Ekim). Yükseköğretimde yıldırma. *Uluslararası 5. Balkan Eğitim ve Bilim Kongresi Kongre Kitabı* içinde (s. 55-60). Edirne.
- Gümüş, M. (1995). *Yönetimde başarı için altın kurallar*. İstanbul: Alfa Basım Dağıtım.

- Güner, N. (1988). Çocuk ve oyun. *Yaşadıkça Eğitim Dergisi*, 4, 32-41.
- Hansen, A., Høgh, A., Persson, R., Karlson, B., Garde, A., & Orbaek, P. (2006). Bullying at work, health outcomes, and physiological stress response. *Journal of Psychosom Res*, 60 (1), 63-72.
- Hecker, T. E. (2007). Workplace mobbing: A discussion for librarians by. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 33 (4), 439-445.
- Karasar, N. (1998). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemi*. Ankara: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Kartal, H. ve Bilgin, A. (2008). Öğrenci, veli ve öğretmen gözüyle ilköğretim okullarında yaşanan zorbalık. *İlköğretim Online*, 7 (2), 485-495.
- Karyağdı, A. (2007). *Örgütlerde yıldırma (Mobbing)*. Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi, İnönü Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. İşletme Anabilim Dalı, Malatya.
- Leymann, H. (1996). The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 165-185.
- Mikkelsen, E. G., & Einarsen, S. (2002). Relationships between exposure to bullying at work and psychological and psychosomatic health complaints: The role of state negative affectivity and generalized self-efficacy. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 43, 397-405.
- Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı (MEB). (2008). *Millî eğitim istatistikleri: Örgün eğitim 2007-2008 yılı*. Ankara: Yazar.
- Namie, G. (2003). Workplace bullying: Escalated incivility. *Ivey Business Journals*, 68 (2), 1-6.
- Niedl, K. (1996). Mobbing and well-being: Economic and personnel development implications. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 239-249.
- Özdemir, S. ve Muradova, T. (2008). Örgütlerde motivasyon ve verimlilik ilişkisi. *Journal of Qafqaz University*, 24, 146-153.
- Öztürk, A. (2001). *Okul öncesi eğitimde oyun*. İstanbul: Esin Yayınevi.
- Pişkin, M. (2005). *Okulda şiddet*. <http://www.e-okul.ws/kategorilenmemis/okulda-iddet>. adresinden 24 Haziran 2011 tarihinde edinilmiştir.
- Poyraz, H. (1999). *Okul öncesi eğitimde oyun ve oyuncaklar*. Ankara: Anı Yayıncılık.
- Rayner, C. (1997). Workplace bullying: Do something! *Journal of Occupational Health and Safety - Australia and New Zealand*, 14 (6), 581-585.
- Urasoğlu, H. B. (2007). *Ortaöğretim öğretmenlerinde psikolojik şiddet düzeyi*. Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi, Niğde Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Niğde.
- Vartia, M. (1996). The sources of bullying -psychological work environment and organizational climate. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5 (2), 203-214.
- WHO. (2004). The WHO Cross-national study of health behavior in school-aged children from 35 countries: Findings from 2001-2002. *The Journal of School Health*, 74 (6), 204-206.