

Full Length Research Paper

Relationship between teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills

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The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between classroom teachers' perception of mobbing phenomenon and their problem solving skills. The sample of the study is composed of 208 classroom teachers working in the primary schools in the Osmangazi district of Bursa during the 2013-2014 educational year. The data required for the study was collected using a data collection tool, with the first section, the "Personal Information Form"; the second section, the "Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ)"; and the third section, the "Problem Solving Inventory". According to the findings obtained, the teachers' perceptions of mobbing phenomenon were at "Never" level; no significant differences were found according to the variables of gender, marital status and educational status; however, a significant difference was found according to the variable of age. The teachers' problem solving skills were at low level. It was determined that the teachers' problem solving skills did not differ according to the variables: gender, marital status, age and educational status. It was also determined that there was a low level of significant relationship between the teachers' perceptions of mobbing phenomenon and their problem solving skills.

Key words: Mobbing, problem solving skills, classroom teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Mobbing covers such behaviors systematically exhibited towards employees by their superiors, subordinates or equal-rank colleagues as ill treatment, threatening, violence, intimidation and insulting (Tınaz, 2006). In order to describe negative behaviors such as mobbing, those behaviors need to be repeated systematically for at least six months and once a week (Leyman, 1996). That is to say, the phenomenon of mobbing is not a stable but a

continuously changing process. It was determined that the shortest mobbing duration is 6 months; the average exhibition duration is 15 months; the main period during which the permanent and heavy marks of the process become evident is 29 to 46 months (Tınaz, 2006). Leymann takes this process in five stages, namely conflict, aggressiveness, involvement of administration, being declared as difficulty-mind fault and compulsory

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resignation and being dismissed (Davenport et al., 2003). Leymann (1996) stated in a study that the risk for a person to be subjected to mobbing during a working life of 30 years is 25%.

Leymann (1990) identified 45 separate mobbing behaviors and gathered these under five different groups according to the characteristics of behaviors. These affect one's show of him/herself and the establishment of communication, attacks on social relationships, attacks on reputation, attacks on a person's life quality and professional status and direct attacks on a person's health. The continuous and systematic exhibition of these behaviors is intentional harassment.

When mobbing is not taken seriously, it might load great costs both on organizations and individuals. It may not only create physical and psychological problems in victims but it may also cause big losses in organizations by leading to loss of workforce (Kirel, 2008).

Problem solving is defined as "a process requiring a series of efforts aiming to eliminate difficulties encountered in order to reach a certain goal" (Izgar et al., 2004). Being knowledgeable of the concept of problem solving is not sufficient to solve a problem. A person with developed problem solving skills can effectively use knowledge in problems which she/he encounters. However, a person with underdeveloped problem solving skills does not use knowledge functionally but instead he/she just carries it (Altun, 2013). The problem solving process is composed of the steps of recognition and identification of the problem, determination of the goal, formation and evaluation of solution alternatives, making decision and evaluation (Kösterelioglu, 2007). In order to solve a problem, a careful and meticulous work should be done. It is necessary that an individual should gather information, adapt and use this information within a framework of a strategic plan, make predictions and evaluate them for a solution. And for these to take place, an important period of time is needed. However, since a teacher as a victim of mobbing undergoes a stressful working life in a negative interaction environment, he/she does not generally find the sufficient time needed to solve a problem. Even if he/she finds the necessary time, he/she may have difficulty finding a solution due to the systematic character of the problem solving process and the stress under which he/she lives (Çetin, 2011).

Solving a problem depends on many variables. A problem's suitability to an individual's age, degree of having fore knowledge or previous training for a solution, ability, health, attitude, benefits of a solution for the individual, personality characteristics, are the variables which may have an effect on problem solving (Ulupınar, 1997).

Problem solving may differ from individual to individual and from problem to problem. Coping with problems depends on a person's problem solving ability, cognitive self-evaluation and ability to use his/her problem solving skills by focusing on the problem (Heppner et al., 1985).

Heppner and Baker (1997) stated problem solving and

the aspect of coping as follows:

1. The aspect of coping ability in general: Coping focuses on the problem and emotion.
2. Some competencies related to the definition of the problem: For example, creating alternatives and the ability to make decisions.
3. Cognitive processes: For example, consequential thinking.
4. Self-appreciation as a problem-solver: The individual feels self-sufficient and self-confident about the matter of problem solving.

In the solution of personal problems, individuals take part in the problem solving process according to their own personality characteristics and differences. In previous studies, it was found that problem solving is related to physical health (Elliot, 1992), opportunity to advance career (Heppner and Krieshok, 1983) and academic performance (Elliot et al., 1990).

According to a study carried out in Scandinavia, the phenomenon of mobbing, which can be encountered in every workplace, is observed more commonly in non-profit educational institutions and the health sector when compared with bigger enterprises due to fewer protection mechanisms (Davenport et al., 2003). Mobbing is performed and legitimized in workplaces where management weakness and organization disorder are higher with the aim of achieving discipline and increasing productivity (Atman, 2012). For this reason, for teachers to perform their duties well, necessary conditions should be created and factors hindering their duties should be determined.

Teachers managing to solve problems which they encounter in daily life may fall into the focal point of mobbing behaviors exhibited by their colleagues in institutions where they work. As stated by Davenport et al. (2003), teachers working in educational institutions have more sensitive personality structure. The teachers having problem solving skills and aiming to provide their students with guidance in this direction are perceived by people around them as those who are promising in their professions and have the potential to build a successful career. Attackers exhibiting mobbing behaviors toward these successful teachers are the people who are hungry for interest, need praises, have an inflated self-perception and, according to Leymann, are weak, insecure and coward and resort to intimidation for the compensation of their own insufficiencies (Kök, 2006).

In order to lead a healthy and happy life, people should be able to solve problems which they encounter effectively. A successful and healthy life depends on people's ability to solve problems. With solutions created as a result of encountered problems, people try to protect their psychological, social and behavioral integrities. For problems which people encounter do not only decrease their productivity, attachment, life satisfaction, but they may also affect their emotional relationships with their

close environment and physiological health negatively (Basmacı, 1998). It is likely that teachers who are unable to solve problems which they face may be subjected to mobbing by their administrators, colleagues, students' parents and students in institutions where they work. In clinical psychological studies, it is reported that it is a higher probability that people who abstain from claiming their rights and defending themselves strongly avoid conflicts, are honest and well-intentioned and chosen as mobbing victims (Kök, 2006).

Relationships between mobbing and different variables were examined. Cemaloğlu (2007) examined the relationships between the leadership styles and mobbing; Demirdağ (2017) examined the relationships between mobbing and organizational justice and organizational confidence; Mutlu (2013) and Karahan and Yılmaz (2014) examined the relationship between mobbing and organizational commitment; Gün (2016) examined the relationship between mobbing and job satisfaction. Konaklıoğlu and Özişik Yapıcı (2016) examined the usability of the conflict resolution methods in terms of the solution of psychological violence. Starting from these studies that obtain significant relationships between mobbing and different variables, it can be stated that developing communication ways, increasing organizational commitment, organizational confidence, organizational justice, developing leadership styles and problem solving skills, and increasing conflict resolution methods will help decrease mobbing.

One of the most strategic parts of the education system, primary school teachers' falling victim to mobbing by the school administration, their colleagues, students' parents and students is an important factor decreasing organizational commitment, productivity and deadening problem solving skills. Today, this situation is more frequently encountered. In such a situation causing negative social, psychological, physical consequences, individuals should firstly be aware of this situation and then help to find the necessary strength in themselves to struggle with it. Teachers should be able to use their problem solving skills while struggling with the phenomenon of mobbing of which they are aware is of importance, in order to overcome their problems. This study aimed to determine the level of relationship between the classroom teachers' perception of the phenomenon of mobbing and their problem solving skills. To achieve this aim, answers were sought for the following questions:

- 1) At which level are the classroom teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon of mobbing? Is there a significant difference between the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables: gender, age, marital status and educational status?
- 2) At which level is the classroom teachers' problem solving skills? Do the classroom teachers' problem

solving skills differ significantly according to the variables: gender, age, marital status and educational status?

- 3) Is there a significant relationship between the classroom teachers' perceptions of the phenomenon of mobbing and their problem solving skills?

METHODOLOGY

The research model

This research employed the relational scanning model, a research model aiming to determine the degree or existence of simultaneous change among two or more variables (Karasar, 2011).

Population and sample of the study

The population of the study was composed of the classroom teachers in the Osmangazi District of Bursa during the 2013-2014 educational year. The sample of the study was composed of 208 classroom teachers at the primary schools in the Osmangazi District of Bursa. The descriptive statistics of the teachers in the sample is given in Table 1.

It is shown in Table 1 that 67.8% (141) of the participant (classroom teachers) were female and 32.2% (67) were male; 51.9% (108) of them were aged between 23 and 31 years, 32.7% (68) of them were aged between 32 and 40 years, 11.5% (24) of them were aged between 41 and 49 years and 3.8% (8) of them were aged over 50 years; 62.5% (130) of them were married and 37.5% (78) were single; 3.3% (7) had an associate degree, 88.5% (184) had an undergraduate degree and 8.2% (17) had a post-graduate degree.

Data collection tool

In order to collect data, a measurement tool composed of 3 sections was used. In this section, there are determining questions aiming to determine the teachers' personal characteristics (gender, age, marital status, educational status, satisfaction from the school of service and the frequency of having problems). In the second section, the 'Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ)' developed by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) and adapted by Cemaloğlu (2007) into Turkish' was used. The NAQ is a five-point Likert type scale composed of 21 questions aiming to research into the phenomenon of psychological intimidation. The levels of participation in the opinions included in this scale were scored as 1 (Never), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Once a Month), 4 (Once a Week) and 5 (Every Day). Moreover, in the third section, the Problem Solving Inventory developed by Heppner and Peterson (1982) and adapted by Şahin et al. (1993) into Turkish was used. The inventory is a 6-point Likert type scale composed of 35 questions. The inventory was scored as 1 (I never behave in this way), 2 (I rarely behave in this way), 3 (I sometimes behave in this way), 4 (I often behave in this way), 5 (I mostly behave in this way) and 6 (I always behave in this way). In the scoring procedure, the items numbered 9, 22 and 29 were not scored. The items numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 25, 26, 30 and 34 were inversely scored. It was assumed that these items represented sufficient problem solving skills. The total score which could be taken from the scale varied between 32 and 192; the scores varying between 32 and 80 indicated a high level of problem solving skill and the ones varying between 81 and 192 indicated a low level of problem solving skill (Şavaşır and Şahin, 1997; Üstündağ and Beşoluk, 2012). A high score (the highest score was 192) was interpreted as the absence of the ability to find

Table 1. Descriptive statistics belonging to the sample group according to the variables.

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	141	67.8
	Male	67	32.2
Age	23-31	108	51.9
	32-40	68	32.7
	41-49	24	11.5
	Over 50	8	3.8
Marital status	Married	130	62.5
	Single	78	37.5
Graduation	Associate degree	7	3.3
	Undergraduate degree	184	88.5
	Post-graduate degree	17	8.2
Total	-	208	100

effective solutions to problems. A low score (the lowest score was 32) was interpreted as the effectiveness in problem solving and behaviors and attitudes related to successful problem solving and the individual's trusting his/her problem solving ability (Şahin et al., 1993; Ünüvar, 2003; Erdoğan, 2004).

Data analysis

The answers given to the data collection tools were coded and loaded into the SPSS 20.0 statistical package program. In analysis of the data, the arithmetic mean, frequency, standard deviation, variance analysis was used and, in all the statistical analyses, the significance level of 0.05 was taken as a basis. The teachers' perceptions of mobbing and problem solving skill levels were described by using the arithmetic means. In order to examine if the answers showed normal distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used. The test results are given in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2 ($p= 0.000$; $p< 0.05$), it was determined that the answers given to the NAQ did not show a normal distribution. As stated by Baştürk (2010), it was considered appropriate to use the Mann-Whitney U test, one of the non-parametric statistical methods and the equivalence of the t-test with two independent samples (independent samples t-test) used in the parametric tests and the Kruskal-Wallis H test, one of the non-parametric tests and the equivalence of the between-groups one-way analysis of variance used in the parametric tests in the analysis of the data. The problem solving inventory ($p= 0.505$; $p> 0.05$) showed a normal distribution and as a result of the t-test with two independent samples (Independent Samples t test) and the ANOVA analysis used in parametric tests, findings were reached. For classification of the answers given by the teachers to the scale items, the formula,

$$\text{Distribution Interval} = \frac{\text{The highest value} - \text{The lowest value}}{\text{Number of degrees}} = 0.80$$

was used and, according to this formula, the distribution interval of the participation level section was found to be 0.80. By adding this

value to the degree coefficients, the following expectation level intervals were determined. For the NAQ, the participation level was graded as follows:

Levels of participation

- 1.00 - 1.81 Never
- 1.82 - 2.61 Sometimes
- 2.62 - 3.41 Once a month
- 3.42 - 4.21 Once a week
- 4.22 - 5.00 Every day

RESULTS

Teachers' perceptions of mobbing phenomenon

The results indicating the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing phenomenon are presented in Table 3. As shown in Table 3, it was determined that the teachers' perceptions related to the phenomenon of mobbing were at 'never' level ($\bar{X} = 1.48$). Teachers not subjected to mobbing in environments at their schools of service firstly feel being in a more comfortable environment. The existence of secure, peaceful and healthy environments provided to teachers so as to perform their duties of training next generations of the country at the top level and their not being subjected to mobbing is a pleasing situation.

The teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables: Gender and marital status

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test applied to determine the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to their gender and marital status are

Table 2. Distributions of the Negative Acts Questionnaire and the Problem Solving Inventory

Kolmogorov-Smirnov	N	\bar{X}	Ss	K-Smirnov Z	p
Mobbing (NAQ)	208	28.55	10.44	3.384	0.000*
Problem Solving	208	82.07	19.57	0.825	0.505

Table 3. The teachers' perceptions of mobbing phenomenon.

Parameter	N	\bar{X}	SD	Level
Teachers' perceptions of mobbing	208	1.48	14.10	Never

Table 4. The teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables of gender and marital status (Mann-Whitney U test)

Mobbing		N	Sum of ranks	Mean of ranks	U	Z	p
Gender	Female	141	14664.00	104.00	4653,000	-0.175	0.861
	Male	67	7072.00	105.55			
Marital status	Married	130	13334.00	102.57	4819.000	-0.600	0.548
	Single	78	8402.00	107.72			

presented in Table 4. As shown in Table 4, it was observed that the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing did not differ significantly according to the variables: gender ($p= 0.861$; $p> 0.05$) and marital status ($p= 0.548$; $p> 0.05$).

The teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables: Age and educational status

In order to determine the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables: age and educational status, the Kruskal Wallis H test was applied. The test results are presented in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, it was observed that while the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing did not differ significantly according to their educational status ($p= 0.481$; $p> 0.05$), they differed significantly according to the variable of age ($p= 0.003$; $p<0.05$). In the groups where a difference was found, in order to determine which group differences were found, the paired-comparison Mann-Whitney U test was applied. When it was examined according to the variable, age, it was determined that the mobbing perceptions of the teachers aged between 23 and 31 were higher than those of the teachers aged between 32 and 40 and the ones aged between 41 and 49.

The teachers' problem solving skills

The result related to the classroom teachers' problem solving skills according to the problem solving inventory

mean scores is presented in Table 6. As shown in Table 6, it was observed that the classroom teachers' problem solving skill levels were low with a mean score of 82.07.

The teachers' problem solving skills according to the variables: Gender and marital status

The results of the independent samples t test applied in order to determine the teachers' problem solving skills according to the variables of gender and marital status are presented in Table 7.

As shown in Table 7, it was observed that the classroom teachers' problem solving skills did not differ significantly according to the variables: gender ($p= 0.446$; $p> 0.05$) and marital status ($p= 0.629$; $p> 0.05$).

The teachers' problem solving skills according to the variables: Age and educational status

In order to determine the classroom teachers' problem solving skills according to the variables: age and educational status, One-Way ANOVA was applied. The analysis results are presented in Table 8. As shown in Table 8, the classroom teachers' problem solving skills did not differ significantly according to the variables, age ($p= 0.972$; $p> 0.05$) and educational status ($p= 0.287$; $p> 0.05$).

Relationship between the teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills

The third sub-problem of the study was stated as "Is

Table 5. The teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variables of age and educational status (Kruskal Wallis H test).

Mobbing		n	Mean rank	SD	χ^2	p	Difference
Age	a) 23-31	108	118.54	3	14.194	0.003*	a-b a-c
	b) 32-40	68	87.45				
	c) 41-49	24	85.52				
	d) 50+	8	116.88				
Educational status	Associate degree	7	84.86	2	1.463	0.481	-
	Undergraduate degree	184	104.12				
	Post-graduate degree	17	116.68				

Table 6. The teachers' problem solving skill levels

Problem solving inventory	n	X	SD
Total	208	82.07	19.57

Table 7. The teachers' problem solving skills according to their gender and marital status (Independent Samples T Test).

Problem solving		n	X	SD	t	p
Gender	Female	141	81.33	19.00	-0.764	0.446
	Male	67	83.62	20.77		
Marital Status	Married	130	81.57	20.38	-0.483	0.629
	Single	78	82.89	18.24		

Table 8. The teachers' problem solving skills according to the variables of age and educational status (One-Way ANOVA)

Problem solving		N	X	SD	Sum of squares	Mean of squares	F	p
Age	23-31	108	82.22	18.75	90.55; 79199.36	30.18; 388.23	0.078	0.972
	32-40	68	81.54	20.46				
	41-49	24	83.45	20.84				
	50+	8	80.37	22.31				
Educational status	Associate degree	7	86.00	14.15	960.105; 78.329.813	480.053; 382.097	1.256	0.287
	Undergraduate degree	184	82.55	19.71				
	Post-graduate degree	17	75.17	19.31				

there a significant relationship between the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills?" The analysis results are presented in Table 9.

As indicated in Table 9, in order to determine the relationship between the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills, Pearson correlation was used. As a result of the analysis, it was observed that there was a low level of significant

relationship between the teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills ($r=0.180$, $p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

It is understood that the teachers' perceptions of mobbing were at 'Never' level ($\bar{X} = 1.48$). Teachers' not being

Table 9. The Pearson's correlation test results indicating the relationship between the teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills.

Mobbing and problem solving total scores		Mobbing total score	Problem solving total score
	r	1	0.180
Mobbing total score	p	-	0.009
	n	208	208
	r	0.180	1
Problem solving total score	p	0.009	-
	n	208	208

subjected to mobbing in environments at their schools of service firstly makes them feel being in a more comfortable environment. The existence of secure, peaceful and healthy environments provided to teachers so as to perform their duties of training next generations of the country at the top level and their not being subjected to mobbing is a pleasing situation. Similar results were also reached in the study carried out by Yavuz (2007) with the employees of the Medicine Faculty Hospital of the Suleyman Demirel University. According to the study results, the psychological intimidation perceptions of the hospital employees were at 'Never' level. The employees stated not been subjected to negative intimidating behaviors. Similar results were also reached in the study carried out by Mutlu (2013).

It was observed that the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing did not differ significantly according to the variables of gender and marital status, and this result obtained in relation to the variable of gender is also in line with the ones reached in the studies done by Yavuz (2007), Demirgil (2008), Palaz et al. (2008), Günel (2010), Yeşiltaş and Demirçivi (2010), Gün (2016) and Demirdağ (2017). However, in the studies done by Leymann (1996), Björkquist et al. (1994), Salin (2001), Pryor et al. (1995), Atalay (2010), Ergun et al. (2008), Solakoğlu (2007), it was found that women were subjected to intimidating behaviors more frequently than men due to their vulnerable structure resulting from their physical characteristics, looking weak and people's opinions of intimidating them more easily. However, in the studies carried out by Cemaloğlu and Ertürk (2007) and Pekdemir (2010), it was found contrary to the general judgment in the literature that the male teachers were subjected to higher intimidation as compared to their female counterparts. According to the findings obtained from different studies, different results may arise from different countries, cities, sectors, working environments or selected sample groups. In a study on teachers, Çetin (2011) determined that there was no difference according to gender. This result overlaps the result of this study. Yeşiltaş and Demirçivi (2010) found that the unmarried staff were subjected to mobbing more than the married staff; Atalay (2010) reached a significant result which

supports this opinion. Although, no results were observed which are consistent with these two studies, Günel (2010), Palaz et al. (2008), Yavuz (2007), Demirgil (2008) and Pekdemir (2010) could not find significant difference and the results found by these studies support each other.

It was observed that while there was no significant difference between the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing according to the variable of educational status, there was a significant difference according to the variable of age. When it was examined according to the variable, age, it was determined that the mobbing perceptions of the teachers aged between 23 and 31 years were higher than those of the teachers aged between 32 and 40 years and the ones aged between 41 and 49. According to this, it can be considered that the reason why young teachers are subjected to mobbing in the first years of their profession might be that they have not acquired necessary experience since they are new graduates or that they are more knowledgeable of the phenomenon of mobbing, that is, they have a more developed awareness. Palaz et al. (2008) found that the people aged over 35 years were more subjected to mobbing; Günel (2010) found that the workers aged between 31 and 40 years were subjected to mobbing more than the ones who were aged below 30 years; Yeşiltaş and Demirçivi (2010) found that the young workers aged between 18 and 24 years and between 25 and 29 years were subjected to mobbing more frequently due to their being inexperienced. According to the significant difference found by Yavuz (2007), the workers aged between 18 and 26 years are subjected to mobbing more frequently. Çelik and Peker (2010) reached the conclusion that the teachers aged between 31 and 40 years were subjected to mobbing more frequently than the teachers aged between 21 and 30 years. Atalay (2010), Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) and Leymann and Gustavsson (1996) obtained a result supporting these findings. In this respect, the significant finding in the literature in relation to different age groups' being victims to psychological mobbing is in line with this study. The absence of a significant difference in the studies carried out by Demirgil (2008), Pekdemir (2010), Çetin (2011)

and Gün (2016) is not similar to this study. While the rigid structure of the organization, many hierarchical steps, closed communication channels and the stressful working environment are among the organizational reasons of mobbing, the victim's being able to create new ideas and interpret the world from different perspectives, being a brilliant element or a newly-employed, inexperienced young person in terms of education, appearance and intellectual accumulation, might be a reason for competitive and selfish people to apply mobbing (Arpacioğlu, 2003).

The classroom teachers' problem solving skill levels were low. Çetin (2011) determined that the problem solving skills of the primary school teachers were at 'mostly' level. Üstün and Bozkurt (2003) showed in a study on primary school administrators that the administrators had low level problem solving skills. Güleç and Mutlu (2016) showed that classroom teachers' problem solving skills were low level. It overlaps this situation.

It was observed that the problem solving skills of the classroom teachers did not differ significantly according to the variables, gender and marital status. Biber and Kutluca (2013) showed that the female students had higher problem solving skills than the male students. It does not overlap this situation. Nazlı (2013) showed in a study on nurses that problem solving skills did not differ according to gender. Moreover, Çetin (2011) and Güleç and Mutlu (2016) also showed that the problem solving skills of the teachers did not differ according to gender. This study is in line with this situation.

The problem solving skills of the classroom teachers did not differ significantly according to age and educational status. Çetin (2011) determined that the problem solving skills of the teachers differed significantly according to the length of service. This finding is not in line with this study. Kösterelioğlu (2007) determined a significant difference. This finding is in line with this study. Çetin (2011) and Acar and Dündar (2008) did not find a significant difference according to the variable of educational status, which supports this study.

There was a low level significant relationship between the classroom teachers' perceptions of mobbing and their problem solving skills. Çetin (2011) found a positive significant low level of relationship between the primary school teachers' problem solving skills and the levels of their being subjected to intimidation. This finding corresponds to that of the current study.

SUGGESTIONS

It is observed that as the age and the service length of classroom teachers decrease and as the frequency of having problems increases, their mobbing perceptions increase. In this case, seminars can be given to teachers to increase their awareness in relation to the phenomenon of mobbing and teach them ways on getting

rid of this situation.

As teachers' problem solving skills increase, their perceptions of mobbing decrease. The phenomenon of mobbing being tried to be hidden and affecting individuals' lives negatively can be overcome by increasing problem solving skills. In addition to giving problem solving skills training and theoretical education, activities including practices can be organized for teachers to have them participate actively.

It is important that teachers undertaking the duty of training the building stones of the future properly, healthily and wisely, should have high level of problem solving skills and share these skills with their students. In this case, environments, which are free from a dangerous phenomenon like mobbing and in which they can exhibit their problem solving skills at top level, should be organized for teachers to continue their educational duties healthily, effectively and permanently.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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