Perception of Faculty Members Exposed to Mobbing about the Organizational Culture and Climate

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Abstract

The present research aimed to investigate non-ethichal behaviors and mobbing to which academic staff in universities are subjected. Twelve the academic staff who were subjected to mobbing in universities in Turkey were interviewed. The research was formed in a qualitative design. Results show that the metaphors that the instructors use to liken their administrators such as the components of organizational culture are negative organizational stories, lack of organizational heroes, reduced of organizational faithfulness, organizational ceremonies consisting of formalities, weakness of organizational moral codes of conduct, lack of positive role-models as examples, availability of the administrators who are impossible to discuss about, organizational prestige loss, insufficiency of organizational language, emotion and understanding demonstrated that a very weak organizational culture is available, and at the same time negative organization culture trigger psycho-violence.

Key Words

Mobbing, University, Academic Staff, Organizational Culture, Organizational Climate.

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With this study, it is aimed to investigate the perceptions of faculty members, who have been exposed to mobbing, about the organizational culture and climate. Twelve faculty members exposed to mobbing are identified and interviewed. The research used a qualitative design and the phenomenology design is used according to perception the research. The open-ended interview technique is used as the structure of the research. While analyzing the data, categorical analysis is used. According to the research results, faculty members exposed to mobbing indicate that the organizational culture and climate are negative. They suggested that there should be consciousness about mobbing and precaution to eliminate those behaviors

Culture of an organization is the sub-culture of the society and it is the whole system of the properties shared by organizational members and the meaning setting apart it from the other organizations (Köse, Tetik, & Ercan, 2001; Özkalp, 1995). Organizational culture occurs with the unity of an organization that is a member of the people who share common beliefs, values, norms, symbols, ceremonies, rituals, practices, feelings, interactions, activities, emotions, expectations, assumptions, attitudes, behavior forms, policies, traditions, and perceptions (Aydın, 2001; Bladford, 1995; Burstein, 1991; Cafoğlu, 1997; Claver, Llopis, Gonzales, & Gasco, 2001; Çelik, 2000; Çelik, 2002; Dinçer, 1994; Frost, & Gillespie, 1998; Güçlü, 2003; Gül, & Gökçe, 2008; Halis, 2001; Hummel, 1994; Köse et al., 2001; Özkalp, 1995; Raz, 2002; Sabuncuoğlu, & Tüz, 1998; Schein, 2002; Şahin, 2004; Şişman, 2000, 2002; Yaman, 2007; Baker cited in Yılmaz, & Oğuz, 2005; Young, 2007).

Organizational culture is also a product of selected processes, administrative functions, organizational behaviors, and structure and functioning of the organization in interactions with the environment (Erdem, 2007; Karslı, 1998). When successful organizations are examined, their own specific culture has emerged where it is evident that such cultures promote strong culture as a goal of the organizations (Çırpan, & Koyuncu, 1998). Distinquishing the difference between the culture and the climate is also important. While climate focuses on how the organization works, culture focuses on why the organization works on a particular style. Some researchers defend that this is an artificial distinction (Balcı-Bucak, 2002).

As a concept, mobbing is defined as emotional assaults (Yaman, 2007, 2009a) subjected to an employee working in an organization, and done

for different reasons, by the superior(s), colleague(s), or subordinate(s). Tınaz (2006) states that the psychological costs of mobbing in organizations is a collapse in organizational values, negative climate, disputes and conflicts between individuals, distrust media, general reduction of respect, and restriction of the creativity of the employees because of their unwillingness to restrict creativity.

There are research findings about a close relationship between mobbing and organizational culture and climate (Blase, & Blase, 2003; Bren, & McNamara, 2004; DiMartino, 2003; Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2003; Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994; Vartia, 1996; Vickers, 2006; Zapf, 1999). In addition, there are reserach about mobbing related to university staff (Björkqvist, Osterman, & Hjelt-Bck, 1994; Lewis, 2004). According to Terzi (2004), investigating the culture of organizations that educate qualified people that the community needs is so crucial. In this context, the purpose of this investigation is to determine the views of faculty members about organizational culture and climate.

Method
Design/Model of the Research

The current research is structured around qualitative design. Among various qualitative research designs, phenomenology pattern is used. One of the methods to be used in analysis of organizational culture is to identify the members of the organization and their perceptions about organizational life (Erdem, & İşbaşı, 2001). A researcher who wants to study organizational culture should use qualitative methods such as observation and interview and should reveal the underlying issues, not immediately visible ones (Şimşek, 1994). Attitudes may reflect the culture superficially so it can be examined healthier with qualitative research techniques (Çetin, 2004; Ogbonna, & Haris, 1998).

Study Group

In our research, criteria sampling (Punch, 2005) method is used in the sampling phase. The basic understanding of this sampling method is to work to meet all conditionsbased on a set of predetermined criteria (Yıldırım, & Şimşek, 2005).

Data Collection Tool

In this research, the interview form of the perception about organizational culture by the faculty members, exposed to mobbing was used. Interview method is a data collection tool which provides us why and what people think, their feelings, attitudes, experiences, wishes and explains their perceptions and descriptions of reality and the factors referring their behaviors. It is also a method like a conversation and supplies deeper information about people (Ekiz, 2003; Kuş, 2003; May, 1996; Punch, 2005; Robson, 2001). In previous the research on mobbing the interview method was used (e.g., Blase, & Blase, 2003; Einarsen, 1999; Lewis, 2004; Mikkelsen, 2004). Interviews were recorded with an audio recording device. In the research, standardized open-ended interview (Altunışık, Coşkun, Bayraktaroğlu, & Yıldırım, 2005; Patton, 1990) is used as the structure.

Process

While transcribing the recorded data Mayring's (2000) descriptive record system is used. Content analysis approach is frequently used in the analysis of qualitative analysis of interview data and open-ended questions (such as, Bell, 1999; Robson, 2001). In our research, categorical analysis of content analysis is used. First, the message is divided into units and then these units make a group which is previously identified (Tavşancıl, & Aslan, 2001). In that case, codes take function as creating a full and meaningful group of independent parts (Miles, & Huberman, 1994). Creating categories and their subcategories allows the researcher to re-examine the data (Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1998). The perceptions of faculty members exposed to mobbing about the organizational culture and climate is examined in twelve categories.

Results

According to the research results, all faculty members participated in the interviews expressed that their task or job descriptions were not clear and the adverse situation led to many problems. The uncertainty of the job description causes individuals from different academic positions to do similar jobs.

All teaching staff interviewed expressed that the universities had mate-

rial objects; such as logos or emblems. Indeed, on the subject, as Arslan (2001) draws attention that the most important of the material objects which create an organizations culture are "task sentence" and "organization logos." On the other hand, it is quite striking that academic staff stated that the prestige of the organization is very important to them but it does not provide sufficient levels to satisfy them.

Organizational culture's other features are the conceptual categories of language and sense used in the community organizations. All academic staff attracts attention to the point that they cannot establish language, emotion, and perception of unity with colleagues at the university. The academic staff exposed to mobbing is calling attention to the existence of language units between institutions, but in smaller groups. Participants has also expressed that there is no unity of feeling in the face of the same case based on a common phenomenon. Metaphor defines the spiritual, vogue or difficult ideas which cannot be easily understood (Aydoğdu, 2008; Çelikten, 2006). Most academic staff resembles their universities with negative object or entity and they associated that simulation experience with the negative cases.

Organizations like families have historical stories (O'Neill, 2000) and informal communication supported with historical stories will create a powerful domain (Çelik, 2004).

The vast majority of the faculty members state that there have been negative stories in their universities. Heroes have positive impact which triggers or motives organizations. Especially, they have a significant impact in the development of organizational loyalty and to set a good example of organizational behavior to those who join the organization. In this regard, teaching staff was divided into two for the interview and some of them are talking about heroes in their universities, especially in the radical organizations such as universities, ceremony and rituals have great importance and functions. Ceremonies are very important rewarding mechanisms that make an organization culture rich. But all of the teaching staff interviewed take attention to the unhealthiness of the ceremony and ritual business environment and have described the cases. All teaching staff interviewed state that they do not feel any belonging to their jobs and are negatively affected by this situation. The teaching staff interviewed have expressed that mobbing reduces their organizational loyalty.

According to all teaching staff interviewed, there are negative ethical behavior rules applicable in their offices. They indicate that there are model business managers in place, but have indicated that this is not healthy. They also indicate that things that have not been discussed by the members of the organization are the managers. All teaching staff interviewed gave significant attention to the effect of organizational culture and organizational climate to the mobbing that they have exposure in the work.

In the research conducted, the finding of the fact that 'the subordinates are to involve with the private jobs of their superiors' (Blase, & Blase, 2003; Çiçek, 2006; Leymann, 1996; Yaman, 2007) and the findings that show that research associates are to do additional jobs that do not have academic nature are consistent with the findings of the research (Bakioğlu, & Yaman, 2004; Korkut, Yalçınkaya, & Mustan, 1999).

Instructors likened their universities to negative objects or entities and their administrators to harmful living things (Fineman, Sims, & Gabriel, 2005; Yaman, 2007). Likewise, in some research conducted ("The Top 10 Explanations for Mobbing," 2002; Yaman, 2007), administrators that use psycho-violence were found to have likened to be devious and selfish.

In the research, instructors called our attention to the fact that the ceremonies and rituals were not held healthily at the universities. Likewise, Güney (2006) calls our attention to the fact that informing has a great influence on the organizational culture. Çelikten (2006) underlines that ceremonies simplify cultural change.

Instructors stressed out that the moral codes of conduct are not valid; likewise, there are findings that the moral differences prepare a ground for psycho-violence (Einarsen, 1999; Yaman, 2007, 2008).

Gül and Gökçe (2008) call our attention to the fact that the building blocks that form the culture feed ethical values. Likewise, Terzi (2003) underlines that the values must be at foreground in university culture. According to Poyraz (2006), to choose to be an academic is to choose the values of the university. Likewise, Kramer and Berman (1998) argue that the university values were not adopted sufficiently. Chatman and Barsade (1995), Wimbush and Shepard (1994), attract attentions to the fact that in the organizational culture, group members must take the values as superior.

Instructors said that those taken as role-model are the administrators that have negative behaviors and this situation is not healthy. Çelik

(1997) expresses that in organizations with a solid structure, providing a renewal is quite difficult.

Likewise, Branch, Sheehan, Barker, and Ramsay (2004) found that the despotic people worked generally as superiors. Akbaba-Altun (2003) stresses that if the administrators create a just cultural system that will present an opportunity for more creative works.

On the other hand, according to Köksoy (1998), the reason for the higher expectation of the society from universities is because these organizations create cultural and social values. Yaman (2002) has ascertained that instructors who have had their graduate degrees abroad have higher degree of culture.

Instructors call attention that in the psycho-violence that they suffer, organizational culture plays an important part as an influence. Parallel findings were reached in the research conducted (Blase, & Blase, 2003; Vartia, 1996; Vickers, 2006; Yaman, 2007; Zapf, 1999). Yılmaz and Oguz (2005) underline that faculty administrators are not successful in overcoming the problems. In Nartgün's research (2006), instructors more or less have the designated values. These findings support our research findings.

School managers who are excessively authoritarian and rude were discussed in Aydoğdu (2008). In our research, the instructors used some metaphors for their organizations such as grindstone, apple maggot or monster. They likened their administrators to negative living things known with their negative traits, such as wolves or snakes, and this fact can be taken as the demonstration of their moods. Likewise, in a research conducted in Taiwan (Wu, Liu, & Lua, 2007), a reliable administrator and the organizational structure were determined to be the most important factors that affect the reliable organization climate.

In an organization, organizational culture and the personality of the members of the organization determine whether competition or cooperation is more dominant (Erdoğmuş, 1999). Thus, Tutar (2004) expresses that in organizations that give a value to humans, psycho-violence acts were found to be lesser.

There were proposals that underline that 'the application of the scales (Yaman, 2009b) that are directed to determine psycho-violence in some particular times to the academics will contribute the development of the organization culture'.

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