STUDY ON MOBBING BEHAVIORS EXPERIENCED BY TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study is intended for identification of mobbing behaviors that teachers experience at schools, the underlying reasons for mobbing, their consequences and persons imposing mobbing and for introduction of solutions in line with teachers' opinions in order to avoid mobbing behaviors. This study is a case study that addresses case- specific factors in qualitative research by means of an integrated approach. The study group is composed of 37 teachers that worked in Kilis during the 2013-2014 school year. During the research, a semi-structured interview method has been adopted among others. Descriptive, content and frequency analysis methods have been applied for data analysis. ATLAS.ti 6 package programme has been used for data analysis. Based on the comments from teachers, the most common mobbing behaviors inflicted upon them at schools are: disregarding ideas and opinions, talking behind someone's back, interrupting and ignoring him/her usually. It has been determined that school administrators are the most common persons imposing mobbing. Meanwhile, the impact of mobbing on teachers is: reduced commitment to the school, unhappiness, lack of confidence in the school and depression. Throughout the research, it has been revealed that the underlying reasons for demonstrating mobbing behaviors are: the administrator's concern for losing his/her authority, his/her ambition for acknowledgement of his/her demands and the political and union factions at the school. In order to prevent mobbing behaviors at schools, administration should be merit-based, the administrators should receive in-service training for management of human relations and they should be aware of the legal rights of the teachers under such circumstances.

Keywords: School, teacher, mobbing behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Workplace environment and the time spent in the workplace environment occupy important place in an employee's life. Within this environment and timeframe, several conditions such as disputes with other employees, employees' efforts at self-actualization and rivalry and many others may lead to negative impact on the employees' mental health and stress. Experiencing such conditions at the workplace (stress, job dissatisfaction and burnout) may influence the professional and personal lives of individuals. Mobbing, as one of these factors, is the major cause that threatens the safety, especially psychological, of the individual, has psychosomatic influences on his/her mental and physical condition and consequently affects the performance of both the individual (the employee) and the organization (Cemaloğlu, 2007a: 77-78; Altınkurt, 2012). In Turkey, this concept has taken part in literature with definitions such as psychological violence, bullying, psychological harassment, mental-emotional harassment, etc. (Abay, 2009T; Aydın, 2009). The wording "Mobbing" is used in this research. Mobbing is a complicated, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary subject, it is experienced but concealed (Tınaz, 2006b, Aydoğan, 2010). Despite the fact that mobbing is more likely to happen in hierarchical and service organizations, it may be encountered in any place involving human relations (Dilmaç, 2009). As a major source of organizational ineffectiveness, mobbing is experienced in public and private sectors as well as non-governmental organizations in the world and in our country (Tangaç, 2007). Mobbing is a long-term and systematic situation. There lies an imbalance of power between the persons imposing mobbing and the ones victimized by mobbing. Initially, both parties seem to be equal in power balance, however the victim of mobbing loses his/her power due to behaviors such as innuendo, mocking, despising, reprehension, etc. and is victimized by the person imposing mobbing on him/her progressively and systematically (Tangaç, 2007, Tengilimoğlu and Mansur, 2009). The actual intention of psychological war is to impair and make the counterparty vulnerable (Göktürk and Bulut, 2012). Mobbing, as a form of organizational psychological violence, is a recurring oppression imposed on an unwanted person in the organization in a direct-indirect and explicit-implicit way, conspiratorially, consistently and systematically. It also involves unethical behaviors such as humiliation, intimidation, suppression, verbal or physical harassment, coercion of absolute obedience, inflicting emotional violence, digging up for mistakes, assigning work overload, spreading gossip or alienation and degrading social reputation (Kök, 2006; Cemaloğlu and Ertürk, 2007; Özler, Atalay and Şahin, 2008, Palaz et al., 2008; Aydın, 2009; Doğan, 2009; Ertek, 2009; Aydoğan, 2010 and Günel, 2010; Karakale, 2011; Commission Report, 2011). Mobbing, which arises due to the combination of stressful psychological factors in the organization, damages organizational welfare and affects job satisfaction of employees adversely (Tetik, 2010), involves psychological terror or hostile and unethical communicative actions. Mobbing may be inflicted systematically by one or more individuals on a person left desperate and vulnerable (Leymann, 1996). Mobbing disturbs the employee's serenity and peace and it leads to deteriorating health and decreasing job performance as a result of employees' psychological breakdown (Ministry of Labor and Social Security, 2013:7). In the working environment, mobbing involves behaviors such as dishonoring, insulting, humiliating, attempts to supplant the person, threatening and offending, inflicted on individuals or groups with the intention of harm (Özkalp and Kırel, 2013: 614).

World Health Organization (WHO) defines mobbing as attitudes and behaviors that damage an individual or a group mentally, physically, socially and morally (Akgeyik et al., 2013: 17). Mobbing involves attacks intended for detaching an individual from both his work and social environment through emotional persecution and damage inflicted on an individual, humiliation, accusations, degrading and dishonoring, nuisance, hostile and unethical behaviors and oppression (Zapf, 1999: 70; Davenport et al., 2003: 22; Einarsen et al., 2003: 107, Otrar and Özen, 2009, Mercanlıoğlu, 2010). Heinz Leymann, a Swedish employment psychologist, used the concept of mobbing in professional life in the early 1980's. It is understood that Leymann used this concept, following his research in workplaces where hostile and aggressive behaviors occur similarly and for a long time. (İbicioğlu et al., 2009). Mobbing unfolds in working environments usually when an individual undergoes emotionally attritional and harmful behaviors inflicted by subordinates or peers deliberately and systematically each day over several months. (Toker Gökçe, 2008: 4, Tınaz et al., 2008: 7). Individuals exposed to mobbing react with a passive attitude and experience stress (Özmete, 2011). Emergence of mobbing destroys the peace and safety of the working environment in organizations (Yücetürk, 2003: 973). Therefore, this situation may influence negatively employees' and managers' performance and as a consequence it may lead to failure of the organization in terms of accomplishing expected goals.

It is not an easy exercise to identify the underlying reasons of mobbing behaviors (Özkalp and Kırel, 2013: 618). Ertürk's (2013a: 154) recent studies address mobbing behaviors along with administrative adjustments and social groups. The reasons of mobbing behaviors are not quite apparent. In the beginning, it is difficult to find out who is the victim and who is imposing mobbing. When one party manages to get superiority as a result of a dispute in the meantime, then the victims become obvious (Uğurlu et al., 2012). Competition, division of labor and declining codetermination create rivalry amongst employees. This situation gave rise to mobbing behaviors that negatively influence the employees and the organization (Palaz et al., 2008). The reasons of mobbing in the organizations may include envy, harmful rumors for career, conflicts within the team, peer pressure, workplace environment, managers lacking leadership skills, organizational structure, negative social network of the organization, negative communication and personality traits of the mobbing victim (Tınaz, 2006b:79; Aydoğan, 2010; Eken, 2014:2). Poor workplace and social environment may also lead to mobbing behaviors (Zapf et al., 1996). According to Leymann (1993), the underlying reasons of mobbing at a workplace are: deficiencies in work design, (2) inadequate leadership, insufficient social aspects of the victim and low moral standards at the workplace (Einarsen, 1999: 21). According to Zapf (1999) on the other hand, mobbing originates from organizational conditions (leadership, organizational culture, work stress, organization of work), individuals inflicting mobbing (personality, qualification, social skills) and social groups (hostility, peer pressure, envy, scapegoating).

The frequency of mobbing, its intensity, duration as well as the upbringing, psychology and the background of individuals and other conditions determine the degree of influence that mobbing has on individuals (Ocak, 2008). Psychological harassment (Mobbing) may have negative consequences in relation to social, mental and physical well being (Tınaz, 2006a). The act of mobbing may have adverse effects on individuals such as

psychological and psychosomatic disorder complaints, depression, anxiety, obsession, alienation, post-traumatic stress disorder, decrease in job satisfaction, fatigue, reducing commitment to and confidence in the organization and deterioration of social relationships by tarnishing reputation (Zapf, 1999; Cemaloğlu and Ertürk, 2007: 348; Mikkelsen and Einarsen, 2002: 401, Eğerci, 2009; Altuntaş, 2010, Göktürk and Bulut, 2012; Erdoğan, 2012; Ariza-Montes et al., 2013). The victims suffer most in the course of mobbing. The effects of mobbing become evident as gradually accumulated damages on individuals (Tetik, 2010; Gül and Ağıröz, 2011). In association with post-traumatic stress disorder, individuals experience states like extreme apprehension, obsession, getting scared easily, nervousness, re-experiencing things over and over again, insomnia, low concentration, involuntary movements, intense anxiety and panic attack, tendency to commit suicide or murder (Davenport et al. 2003: 72). Mobbing has an adverse affect on job satisfaction, organizational morale, organizational commitment, efficiency, performance and motivation (Özler et al., 2008). However it might happen or whatever the purpose it might have, mobbing drives a person into an abyss full of psychological and economic damage (Commission Report, 2011).

In the organizations, mobbing is an organizational problem that influences the satisfaction and performance of employees and damages organizational well being (Aktop, 2006). Mobbing has adverse affects not only on the individual, but also potentially on the organization that the individual works for. If remedial measures are not taken to minimize mobbing, then mobbing will spread all across the vital functions of the organization. Respect and trust for the organization and colleagues will decrease, employees and the organization will start to clash, motivation and work performance will go down (Eğerci, 2009). It is understood that mobbing victims lose their confidence in the organization apart from their self-confidence. They deem the organization responsible particularly for all their suffering. Moreover, their commitment to the organization, job satisfaction and performance deteriorate due to the perception that the organization did not intervene to prevent the problems encountered. Mobbing leads to increasing conflicts, negative organizational climate, lack of confidence and disrespect and decreasing motivation and performance in the organization. As a result of this, organizational culture and values are affected negatively (Aydoğan, 2010; Karakale, 2011; Akgeyik et al., 2013: 107). According to Leymann (1996), mobbing behaviors in an organization may be oriented to communication (constraint on self-expression, constant interruption, reprehension), social relationships (isolation from other employees, disregarding), reputation (being ridiculed, gossiped about, mocked about behaviors and personal life), quality of life and work (restriction of duties, assigning irrelevant tasks, designating to a position not compatible with the qualifications of the individual) and well being (physical violence and harassment) (Davenport et al., 2003: 19). On the other hand, economic aspects of mobbing behaviors are health care costs and lack of regular income after leaving employment (Tetik, 2010). It is essential for organizations to take necessary measures in order to prevent mobbing which causes several damage to the organizations and individuals directly and indirectly and to manage and develop solutions for it.

Mobbing is particularly common in non-profit organizations such as health and education sectors (Commission Report, 2011). According to the report by International Labor Organization, teachers suffer from mobbing more

frequently (Ertek, 2009). Elimination or mitigation of mobbing actions in educational institutions will have a positive impact on educational activities and increase success (Aydoğan, 2010). Educational institutions themselves should be the ones fighting to achieve the objectives and principles of education. The structural qualification of educational institutions is important in terms of achievement of objectives stipulated by laws, regulations and the public. Apart from structural qualification, the quality of human resource is also important. The most significant duty of educational institutions and thereby of our teachers is to adopt, maintain and improve moral, ethical, human and cultural values (Ergener, 2008; Aydoğan, 2010). Employees suffer from demotivation, job dissatisfaction and ineffectiveness as a result of mobbing. In particular, mobbing behaviors in educational institutions affect the performance of teachers negatively (Otrar and Özen, 2009). A teacher who is a role model for students, guiding and preparing them for life, cannot be productive if he/she works in a malevolent and unstable environment. When a teacher does not enjoy his/her job, then his/her feelings for the students, school, colleagues and his/her profession may change (Ekinci, 2012). This study is highly significant with regard to the minimization of psychological mobbing inflicted on teachers by school administrators and its effects, and enabling the teachers to perform their jobs more efficiently and ensuring a favorable interactive environment. This study is material, since it describes the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors and the situation of individuals suffering from mobbing and it develops suggestions for elimination of mobbing behaviors at schools. In accordance with the purpose of the study and comments from the teachers, the research seeks the answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of mobbing behavior have you experienced at school?
2. Who was or were imposing mobbing behaviors at school?
3. What is the impact of mobbing behaviors at the school on a teacher?
4. What are the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors in schools?
5. What are your suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors at schools?

METHOD

Study Design

This study is a qualitative research for understanding the "why" of human behavior. Qualitative methods were used in this study, in order to obtain extensive and content-rich data. Qualitative research investigates each case-specific factor (events, individuals, environment, processes, etc.) with a holistic approach (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2005:77). This study is a case study of qualitative research design because of the fact that it is conducted in order to describe the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors and the situation of individuals suffering from mobbing and to bring forward suggestions for elimination of mobbing behaviors in schools.

Study Group

The workgroup is composed of 37 teachers worked in Kilis during 2013-2014 school year. Criterion sampling which is one of the purposive sampling methods has been used for selecting the participants. During criterion

sampling, cases that meet prespecified criteria are investigated (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006). The criterion for establishing the workgroup of this research is considered as teachers' "exposure to mobbing." Designating such a criterion is appropriate to the purpose of this study. Among 37 teachers participating in the research, 6 have 1-5 years, 18 have 6-10 years and 13 have longer than 11 years of professional experience. 22 teachers are male and 15 teachers are female. 12 teachers were working at primary schools, 16 at secondary schools and 9 at secondary education institutions. 9 teachers are between 20 and 30, 24 are between 31 and 40 and 4 are 41 or older age range.

Data Collection Tool

During the research, data are collected by means of interview method. During the research, a semi-structured interview method has been adopted among others. The interview form is a data collection tool including the information about the purpose of the interview and the interview questions (Creswell, 2003:216). The interview form developed by the researchers has been used during data collection process. The questions in the interview form have been prepared by survey text in the relevant field. Appropriate conditions have been ensured for conducting interviews properly. Each interview took 15-30 minutes. At the end of the interviews, the teachers were briefed about Their answers during the action research and it was clarified whether this information reflected their own feelings.

Analysis of the Data

Descriptive, content and frequency analysis methods have been applied for data analysis. Qualitative data analysis package programme ensures quick coding and enables categorization and thematization (Patton, 2002: 442). Therefore, ATLAS.ti 6 was used as the Package programme for qualitative data analysis in this study.

Ensuring Validity and Reliability

Reliability of qualitative research is evaluated on the basis of the conclusive supplementary information they bring to the body of literature and the solutions they offer for the problems in human life (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2006: 265). During the research, reliability was ensured by choosing appropriate environments for the interviews, trying to collect comprehensive information during the interviews and reflecting the interviews to the research as objectively as possible. In order to ensure further reliability and validity, the comments of the teachers have been cited frequently in the research. The demographic information of the study group has also been included in the research so that other researchers can use this information for sampling when conducting their own research of similar nature. This ensures external reliability. In order to be able to ensure validity, the research model, study group, data collection tool, data collection process, data analysis and interpretation have been elaborated in the research.

FINDINGS (RESULTS)

The results obtained during the research were studied in five themes, in relation to the questions asked to the teachers. According to the research results the first theme is the mobbing behaviors that teachers suffer at schools; second one is the person or persons inflicting mobbing; the third is the impact of mobbing on teachers; the fourth is the underlying reasons of mobbing and the fifth is suggestions for prevention of mobbing. Mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers at schools are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1. Mobbing Behaviors Inflicted on Teachers

Theme	Categories	f
	Disregarding ideas and opinions	15
	Talking behind someone's back	14
	Interrupting and ignoring usually	13
	Understating the achievements	12
	Reprehension, insulting speech	11
Mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers	Lack of appreciation	10
	Continuous denigration of performance	9
	Excessive supervision of work	7
	Interference in teacher's scope of authority	7
	Inhibition of opportunities for communication	6
	Causing discomfort by innuendos, gestures or glares	6
	Being ignored by colleagues	5
	Assigning tasks that are incompatible to the skills	4

According to Table 1, Mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers are; Disregarding ideas and opinions (f=15), talking behind someone's back (f=14), interrupting and ignoring usually (f=13), understating the achievements (f=12), reprehension and insulting speech (f=11), lack of appreciation (f=10), continuous denigration of performance (f=9), excessive supervision of work (f=7), interference in teacher's scope of authority (f=7), inhibition of opportunities for communication (f=6), causing discomfort by innuendos, gestures or glares (f=6), being ignored by colleagues (f=5) and assigning tasks that are incompatible to the skills (f=4), respectively. Teachers have made the following explanations when describing the mobbing behaviors they were exposed to:

> *"At the school, my ideas and opinions are disregarded and moreover I was reprehended and insulted, in the presence of others." (Ö:4).*
>
> *"In my working environment, people have been talking behind my back and gossiping about me. I regret experiencing such a situation." (Ö:15).*
>
> *"...I have been exposed to different mobbing behaviors. Normally, we are supposed to submit the works assigned to us after completion but they deliberately interfere and have the works submitted incomplete, in an attempt to exercise pressure on me." (Ö:27).*
>
> *"School administrators never take my opinions into consideration. (Ö:36)*

Table 2 indicates the comments of the teachers about who inflicts mobbing at schools.

Table 2. Share holders Imposing Mobbing on Teachers

Theme	Categories	f
Persons imposing mobbing on teachers	School Administrators	36
	Teachers	17
	Parents	1
	Inspectors	1

According to Table 2, persons imposing mobbing on teachers are; school administrators (f=36), teachers (f=17), parents (f=1) and inspectors (f=1), respectively. Teachers who suffer from mobbing by school administration and other teachers explain this as follows;

> *"The principal and his/her deputies are doing this. There are also some teachers who prompt grouping and inflict mobbing." (Ö:5)*
>
> *"The school principal and his/her deputies treat me this way. Besides, senior teachers / colleagues also demonstrate these behaviors. Especially senior teachers excluded me all the time." (Ö:13)*
>
> *"The school principal inflicts mobbing on me. For instance; he/she assigns an imposition to a teacher or he/she does not intervene in case of an incident in the school yard but instead he/she asks for the hall monitor teacher to act." (Ö:15)*

Table 3 includes the impacts of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers, with respect to their comments.

Table 3. The Impacts of Mobbing Behaviors Inflicted on Teachers

Theme	Categories	f
The impacts of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers	Reduced commitment to the school	14
	Unhappiness	13
	Lack of confidence in school	13
	Depression	13
	Diminishing work satisfaction	11
	Deteriorating performance	10
	Decreasing communication with other employees	8
	Demotivation	8
	Hiding ideas and opinion to him/herself	5
	Inefficient lecturing	3
	Physical impairments	4
	Damage to family relationships	2

According to Table 3, the impact of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers are; Reduced commitment to the school (f=14), unhappiness (f=13), lack of confidence in school (f=13), depression (f=13), diminishing work satisfaction (f=11), deteriorating performance (f=10), decreasing communication with other employees (f=8), demotivation (f=8), keeping his/her ideas and opinions to him/herself (f=5), nonproductive lecturing (f=3),

physical impairments (f=4) and damage to family relationships (f=2), respectively. When indicating the impacts of mobbing behaviors, teachers described them as follows:

"I started to hate the school and the city I work in. Moreover, this situation gave me stress and discomfort. I became aggressive. I have been demotivated. I did not enjoy my job anymore and I lost my confidence in people." (Ö:5)

"I was excluded as well, due to the grouping of teachers. I left the school for a short while, as a result of these problems. I mean, I took a medical leave. Afterwards, I never spent time in the teachers' lounge. I had less and less job satisfaction and I lost my sentimental commitment to the school. I was happy with the school thus far but then I felt completely strange." (Ö:7)

"...When I encountered this situation, I did not want to go to the school. I felt like my four-year university education was for nothing. I did not feel that I belonged to that school and I wanted to stay away from it." (Ö:12)

"I suffered extremely from psychological stress. I felt completely excluded and isolated. I had allergic problems and migraine, due to this psychology." (Ö:13)

"I usually leave the teachers' lounge. I become quiet. I want to withdraw myself from the school. I lost my professional ambition and enthusiasm. I became aggressive." (Ö:18)

"...They made me feel inadequate and like a loser. Then I avoided disclosing my ideas and opinions. I could not manage to focus on lecturing because of over monitoring. I asked for replacement." (Ö:19)

Table 4 includes the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers, with respect to their comments.

Table 4. The Underlying Reasons for Mobbing Behaviors Inflicted on Teachers

Theme	Categories	f
The underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers	The administrator's concern for losing his/her authority	14
	His/her ambition for acknowledgement of his/her demands	11
	Political and union grouping at schools	10
	Poor managerial skills of the administrators	8
	Egocentric mentality	7
	Poor communication skills of the administrators	7
	Non acceptance of different ideas	6
	The Administrators despising the teachers	5
	The administrator's need for appreciation by all teachers	3
	Unusual practices at school	3
	Jealousy at school	2
	The administration not paying attention to ethical values	2
	Educational policies followed	2
	Psychological problems of the administrator	2

According to Table 4, the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers are; the administrator's concern for losing his/her authority (f=14), his/her ambition for acknowledgement of his/her demands (f=11), political and union grouping at schools (f=10), poor managerial skills of the administrator (f=8), egocentric mentality (f=7), poor communication skills of the administrator (f=7), non admittance of different ideas (f=6), the administrators despising the teachers (f=5), the administrator's need for appreciation by all teachers (f=3), unusual practices at school (f=3), jealousy at school (f=2), the administration not paying attention to ethical values (f=2), misleading educational policies (f=2) and psychological problems of the administrator (f= 2), respectively. When indicating the underlying reasons for mobbing behaviors, teachers described them as follows:

> "These behaviors emerge as a result of not being open to diversity, lack of sympathy for lifestyle and political differences, high ego and underestimating the other person." (Ö:3)

> "The concern of school administration for authority may lead to such behaviors. They inflict mobbing because they want to make their presence felt by the employees or they expect respect in return or they need acknowledgement of their ideas and opinions." (Ö:4)

> "The administration's sense of duty is wrong. That's why they are not open to common ideas. Because they suspect that different ideas will restrict their authority. The reason is the fear of criticism originating from the perception that criticism will lead to conflict." (Ö:8)

> "The major reason of these behaviors is that we all have the job title of "teacher" but the administrators forget about the teaching profession as soon as they are chaired with the administrative power. They start to dominate their colleagues. They treat teachers in an egotistical and insulting way." (Ö:11)

> "The motive of the administrator for his/her negative attitude is that he/she overrates his/her status and has an authoritarian personality." (Ö:14)

> "Lack of managerial skills is the primary reason of mobbing. There is no understanding of the skills that an administrator should have. Lack of human values, a strictly bureaucratic administrative mentality and treating teachers like machines are the reasons for mobbing. The assumption of being different, i.e., superior to others, leads to this kind of behaviors." (Ö:15)

> "Individuals being morally immature, disrespect for individual differences and egotism cause these." (Ö:18)

> "...these behaviors are driven by reason of the fact that the administrator favors their fellow teachers in political and union activities." (Ö:19)

> "I think the greatest factor for unfolding of these behaviors is that persons lacking administrative skills are appointed to these positions. A good administrator is someone who is objective, ensuring the best performance from his/her employees and uniting them. Some of the administrators create favoritism among the employees uttering things like 'I like this teacher but not that one'." (Ö:22)

"Communication problems are the major reasons. "Because, people do not listen to each other. Negative behaviors of the administrator are the results of his/her disrespect for the other's opinions and his/her wayward attitude." (Ö:24)

"The reason is that the school principal protects his/her old acquaintances and somehow untouchable people and he/she excludes the ones acting against his/her personal and political interests." (Ö:36)

Table 5 includes the suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers, with respect to their comments.

Table 5. Suggestions for Prevention of Mobbing Behaviors Inflicted on Teachers

Theme	Categories	f
Suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers	Merit based administration	13
	Improving communication skills	13
	Training on ethics	9
	Awareness among teachers of their legal rights	6
	Training of administrators for improving managerial skills	6
	Developing respect at schools	5
	Minimizing union and political activities	5
	Developing a democratic point of view	3
	Acknowledging the employees' scope of authority	3
	Taking performance into consideration	2
	Shorter administration periods	2
	Pre-employment personality tests for education system	2
	Establishing an inspection mechanism for the administration	2
	Improving confidence in the administration	2

According to Table 5, the teachers' comments on the suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers are; merit-based administration (f=13), improving communication skills (f=13), training on ethics (f=9), awareness of teachers about their legal rights(f=6), training of administrators for improving managerial skills (f=6), developing respect at schools (f=5), minimizing union and political activities (f=5), developing a democratic point of view (f=3), acknowledging the employees' scope of authority (f=3), taking into consideration the performance (f=2), shorter administration periods (f=2), use of personality tests for employment in education system (f=2), establishing an inspection mechanism for the administration (f=2) and improving the confidence to the administration (f=2), respectively. Teachers offering solutions for prevention of mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers have indicated these suggestions as follows:

"It is necessary to appoint ego-free and tolerant administrators. A democratic and objective environment should be established for discussing the problems. The administrators should understand the limits of their authority just as the teachers know their rights. Besides, the teacher should be aware of his/her own rights." (Ö:3)

"All staff should know and act in line with their own rights and responsibilities. A working environment with mutual respect should be maintained." (Ö:4)

"The administrators should receive serious training systematically. Training should be provided in human relations, manners, body language and human psychology. The teachers should understand their legal rights. Such problems will not be encountered if the school is administered with an understanding of human values and in humanitarian conditions." (Ö:6)

"Political and union opinions should not be represented in a professional environment by any means. The administrators should care about the personality and the performance of the teacher in the first place." (Ö:7)

"Tolerant and qualified leaders should be appointed as administrators. It is crucial that political and union activities should not be reflected on the school and interpersonal communication." (Ö:8)

The school administration should arrange events and establish an environment for facilitating the communication among teachers. The administration itself should also pay attention to the communication with teachers and maintain positive communication with them." (Ö:13)

"School administrators should consider the work performance of teachers, not their world perspective or political views. This allows qualified people to be assigned to specific positions. Therefore, the work ethic of teachers improves." (Ö:22)

Truly qualified people should be assigned to all administrative positions. Virtuous and moral administrators are required. People who have managerial skills like capability, tolerance and intelligence and who can appreciate the efforts of their colleagues should be administrators." (Ö:25)

"The administrators of educational institutions should receive in-service training on developing empathy and moral values." (Ö:28)

"People need to pay attention to interpersonal communication. The administrators should regard each person's right to speak and respect the opinions expressed." (Ö:31)

They should avoid destructive or disruptive words and behaviors when communicating with others. It may be necessary to keep distance and retain boundaries. Yet, this needs patience." (Ö:34)

"Qualified people should be the principal and deputy principals. They should have qualifications such as good command of human relations, communication skills, fairness and morality. Besides, administrators should receive training in these topics." (Ö:35)

"We should consider our differences as a treasure and try to understand each other without criticism. We should question our own behaviors rather than find the faults and defects of others." (Ö:37)

CONCLUSION and DISCUSSION

In accordance with the comments of teachers, this study aims to manifest the mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers at schools, their impacts and underlying reasons, people imposing mobbing and suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors. To serve this purpose, open-ended questions have been prepared to receive teachers' comments. These comments have been analyzed through a descriptive method and results have

been established accordingly. This section involves the results of the study, the remarks based on benchmarking with similar studies and relevant literature and the suggestions.

The research concludes that the most common mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers include disregarding and not appreciating ideas and opinions, talking behind their backs and insulting talks (communication). Mobbing is an act of intimidation conducted through actions such as spreading unsubstantiated rumors, unfair accusation, humiliation, denigration, despising, use of violence, sexual harassment, with the purpose of driving the employee from the workplace (Gül and Ağıröz, 2011). When the definition of mobbing is reviewed, it is understood that intimidation behaviors identified in the research results involve mobbing. The results of field studies on intimidation behaviors also support the results of this study. Rate of exposure to mobbing is quite high for the employees of the education sector. The most common negative behaviors include constantly criticizing work at the workplace, interrupting the other person all the time and restricting the opportunities to show abilities (Palaz et al., 2008). In this study and in other researches in the field, the most common behaviors in terms of mobbing inflicted on teachers include behaviors such as disregarding the ideas and opinions and ignoring (Uğurlu et al. 2012; Dangaç, 2007; Gökçe, 2006), speaking in an allusive, humiliating, sarcastic manner, interrupting, underestimating efforts, rumors, bad communication (Gökçe, 2006; Dangaç, 2007; Abay, 2009; Doğan, 2009; Ertek, 2009; Ertürk, 2011; Uğurlu et al. 2012; Ertürk, 2013b; Karakoç, 2016). In addition, the other mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers in the study share similarities with the results of other studies in the field. According to the review of results of similar studies in the field, mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers appear in forms such as underestimating efforts, suggestions and success, ignoring (Gökçe, 2006; Dangaç, 2007; Ergener, 2008; Ertürk, 2011; Uğurlu et al. 2012), making unsubstantial accusations and criticism (Dangaç, 2007; Abay, 2009;Gökçe, 2006), always evaluating performance unfavorably, picking faults/mistakes (Gökçe, 2006), overlooking someone in a working environment (Gökçe, 2006; Dangaç, 2007; Ertürk, 2011), assigning irrelevant tasks that are out of scope in terms of area of responsibility and capacity (Dangaç, 2007; Abay, 2009). An individual may become vulnerable when faced with attitudes like jealousy of his/her success, mocking, ignoring and underestimating (Ekinci, 2012). Due to the fact that exposure of teachers to this kind of behaviors affects adversely several circumstances in the education system (school administration, academic success, cooperation at the school etc.), it becomes compulsory to take some measures in order to prevent these. This is because the results of several research studies reveal that such mobbing behaviors towards teachers recur.

The research concludes that the school administrators inflict mobbing on teachers predominantly. When the conclusions of similar studies (Ertürk, 2005; Gökçe, 2006 Işık, 2007; Palaz et al., 2008; Dangaç, 2007; Alparslan, and Tunç, 2009; Karakale, 2011; Karakoç, 2016) are reviewed, it is also evident that the employees suffer from mobbing by their managers mostly. Globally, 81% of employees experience mobbing by their managers (Alparslan and Tunç, 2009). School Administrators may adopt and use mobbing as a management style. Taking into consideration the impact of mobbing behaviors at school on teachers, the awareness of administrators for problematic elements should be improved (Uğurlu et al., 2012). Teachers also experience mobbing by their fellow teachers. Globally, 58% of employees experience mobbing by their colleagues (Alparslan and Tunç,

2009). In his research, Gökçek (2006) concluded that mobbing behaviors by fellow teachers include disrupting the communication, interrupting, excluding and insulting jokes.

The conclusion of the research is that mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers lead to decreasing commitment to the school and hinder the well being of the workplace. Apart from negative impacts of mobbing on individuals, it also has consequences negatively affecting, although indirectly, organizational success, such as decreasing organizational efficiency and performance, reducing the organizational commitment of employees (Günel, 2010). Mobbing handicaps and weakens the development of organizational efficiency. It is a real fact that generates chronic problems and has a highly burdensome cost (Tınaz, 2006). In a working environment, the victims withdraw themselves from the organization and lose their commitment to it, their attendance and loyalty decline dramatically and the organization loses its competent employees (Ariza-Montes et al., 2013; Eğerci, 2009; Özler, Atalay and Şahin, 2008; Tengilimoğlu and Mansur, 2009, Tetik, 2010). Likewise, the teachers subjected to mobbing feel unhappy at their workplaces. This is because of the fact that mobbing is a major obstacle hindering the well being, welfare and growth of both the organization and the employees (Mercanlıoğlu, 2010). The distress caused by mobbing in the organization may make the individual feel exhausted (Dangaç, 2007). The research concludes that the teacher feels insecure due to mobbing inflicted on him/her. As a result of mobbing, the victim may lose his/her self-confidence and the organization becomes an unsafe place (Tınaz, 2006). The organizational environment becomes full of unrest and increasing conflicts due to mobbing, whereas it could be a peaceful environment of trust (Özler, Atalay and Şahin, 2008). In an organization, there is a negative correlation between mobbing on individuals (psychological violence) and trust. That is to say, when mobbing becomes more severe, the individual will trust the organization less and less (Eğerci, 2009).

The research has identified that the teachers experienced depression, decreasing job satisfaction, deteriorating performance, reluctance for communication and demotivation as a result of mobbing. Karakoç (2016) has also concluded that mobbing leads teachers to consider resignation, hate and feel alienated from the school, experience reduced commitment and performance in teaching. The purpose of mobbing is to make the victim become vulnerable and weak. Under these circumstances, the victim wants to stay away from the workplace, suffering from severe psychosomatic disorders (Demir and Çavuş, 2009). In the organizations, extreme stress and anger caused by mobbing lead to social and personal disturbances in an individual and he/she incurs physiological, psychological and behavioral disorders. These damages include psychological problems such as depression, insomnia, lack of appetite, distress, anxiety, immobility, crying jags, amnesia, difficulty in sleeping, sensitivity, sudden anger, muteness, chronic headaches and neurological diseases, and physiological disorders such as heart disease, abdominal and intestinal spasms, diabetes, dermatological diseases. The financial and emotional costs of their treatment put a heavy strain on the individual (Alparslan, and Tunç, 2009; Doğan, 2009; Altuntaş, 2010; Mercanlıoğlu, 2010; Aydoğan, 2010). Therefore, the individual starts to arrive late for work, feels reluctant to go to the office and becomes less productive (Göktürk and Bulut, 2012).

The research has concluded that the most common reasons for mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers are the administrator's concern for losing his/her authority, his/her ambition for acknowledgement of his/her demands and political and union grouping. Numerous reasons may play a role at the onset of mobbing. These reasons may derive from organizational culture and structure, the current situation and mental state of the person imposing mobbing, social differences of individuals (race, religion, language, sect, ethnic origin), gender discrimination (gender differences), the personality and the current state of the victim, jealousy and ego satisfaction (Tetik, 2010; Alkan, 2011). Based on the analysis of research results, it is understood that the reasons for mobbing usually originate from the perpetrators. These people are weak communicators and leaders, lacking administrative skills, in dire need of praise and praising only their flatterers. These people may conduct mobbing for the sake of preserving their status (Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 2011). Cengiz (2010) has concluded in his research that the school administrators with autocratic administration style are more likely to inflict mobbing behaviors. This is because of the fact that in autocracy, the administrator is the sole decision-maker, his/her communication with employees is extremely inadequate, reward is quite limited, employees are intimidated and punished when required, the chain of command mentality prevails and inspections are conducted frequently. Dilmaç's (2009) study has identified that one of the reasons for mobbing by school principals is communication, according to the perceptions of teachers and administrators. Ertürk's (2011) study also has similar conclusions with the results of this study, in terms of underlying motives for mobbing behaviors. These motives include unfairness and professional inadequacy of the school principal, lack of appreciation and objective assignments, egoism and arrogance of the school principal, assignments irrelevant to the qualifications, the victim's differing political view, jealousy of success, unfair rewards and penalties, lack of appreciation for employees and lack of discussions for solutions to problems. In fact the school principal has a more privileged status than other members of school staff. This status empowers him / her. Yet this power does not necessitate deeming others objects to shepherd. At schools, how teachers and other employees esteem the administrator matters more than this power. School administrators should be able to establish common ground, i.e., be a good communicator as well. (Açıkalın et al., 2015:48-82). School administrators should lead the school accordingly. Even if they impose their legitimate power on employees temporarily, this does not have a positive impact and sustainability.

As a conclusion of the research, it was determined that assignment of administrators should be merit-based in order to prevent mobbing behaviors inflicted on teachers. The review of other outstanding suggestions (improving administrators' communication skills, training on ethics) has also come to a conclusion that the measures to be taken are all related with administrators. As most of the mobbing behaviors towards teachers at schools originate from administrators, suggestions for prevention of mobbing behaviors are also about improving the qualifications and abilities of the administrators. Actually, the school administrator should not be the one to trigger the mobbing but rather he/she should identify the mobbing to prevent it, monitor the early warning signals and take necessary precautions (Cemaloğlu, 2007c; Kırel,2007). The administrators with leadership quality should act as a reinforcer of positive behaviors and a prohibitor against mobbing behaviors. The administrators should strive to establish an organizational culture and strong social bonds among employees (Alkan, 2011). Whereas school administrators need to have certain qualifications and skills and

notwithstanding that there are some theoretical and applied studies conducted in Turkey, school administration is not considered a profession requiring expertise and these qualifications remained only at a theoretical level and could not be applied as required (Ağaoğlu et al., 2012:162). Acting on an assumption that each teacher can be an administrator will not minimize mobbing behaviors but lead to increasing them. School principals should be democratic, educational and community leaders and human resources managers rather than do routine works of the school (Şahin, 2000:259). The most essential duty of school administrators is to establish a peaceful environment at schools. Utmost attention should be paid when assigning school administrators to such an important role and selection should be made among candidates with leadership qualifications, good communication skills, belief in collective wisdom and high moral standing (Aydoğan, 2010). Because, school administrators should lead the way in keeping values alive and be role models in the school (Akman et al., 2017). As a human service and an interactive role, school administration should be addressed in an institutional structure and the administrators should be well- equipped socially, emotionally and mentally (Summak and Özğan, 2007:281). Organizational confidence level of teachers improves as long as the administrators behave ethically and this proves to reduce mobbing perception. (Cemaloğlu and Kılınç, 2012). In a workplace, productive and efficient teamwork can be ensured through healthy and peaceful communication among team members (Otrar and Özen, 2009). The communication should be improved between teachers and administrators working at the school and vertical and horizontal communication channels should remain open (Ocak, 2008). In case of lack of a common understanding between administrators and employees or among employees, disagreements and conflicts will arise. Therefore, administrators should pay attention to the employees' needs, establish transparent communication channels and strive to eliminate conflicts and disagreements (Tengilimoğlu and Mansur, 2009).

The research has concluded that the awareness of teachers of their legal rights can prevent mobbing. In some cases, the more the victim is exposed to mobbing, the more he/she becomes introverted, isolated and incapable of seeking his/her rights. Employees should be fully aware of their rights and they should take necessary actions when they feel they are exposed to mobbing. (Pelit and Kılıç, 2012). Likewise, stipulation of deterrent punishments against mobbing actions in the legal framework will also encourage the victims to exercise their rights (Altuntaş, 2010). The research has reached a conclusion that minimizing union activities at schools may prevent the occurrence of mobbing behaviors. This is due to the fact that the teachers consider unionism a political view and avoid enrolling in unions (Taşdan, 2013:257). This may lead to grouping among teachers (Kara, 2015:436). Frequent discussions on such activities and subjects may affect adversely the relationships among employees at schools and collective vision and mission may be drawn away.

SUGGESTIONS

In line with the results and conclusions of the research as well as the solution suggestions of the participants, the following suggestions have been developed:

1) The individuals should be informed about mobbing behaviors in order to ensure awareness. With the knowledge of what mobbing is about, individuals should not demonstrate such behaviors and the victims should seek their rights.

2) School administration should be considered a profession requiring specialization. For designation of school administrators, selection processes to be followed should involve identifying individuals with moral principles and expertise in human relations.

3) Institutional and individual measures should be taken in order to prevent the administrators from inflicting mobbing on employees for their own personal interests.

4) Actions to be taken should be planned before emergence of mobbing at schools, the employees should be informed about how to prevent it and an appropriate school culture and climate should be established to eliminate mobbing behaviors before they become worse.

5) Since human relations are crucial at schools, training and social activity programs should be organized to improve interpersonal relations.

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