

A CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH ON MOBBING AND ITS EFFECTS ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the relation between mobbing and organizational commitment through conceptual analysis. The main question aimed to be answered by the investigation is what the effects of mobbing on the victims of its in terms of organizational commitment are and how the effects will affect the organizations. For the purpose of answering this question, the theoretical background of mobbing and organizational commitment in international literature has been discussed.

Keywords: Mobbing, Organizational Commitment, Bullying, Victimhood, Psychological Violence, Intimidation

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies in the field of management and work psychology in recent years have pointed out the fact of mobbing, which is a workplace-related psychological problem, is among the reasons for leaving the workplace. Mobbing, which was thought to be a psychological pressure applied by employees to each other in this competitive environment caused by the competition environment brought by globalization and increasing among employees, has emerged as a workplace terrorism that increasing in size and violence over time and manifested itself with serious negative losses both for the employee and the organization. (İlhan, Ü, 2010:40)

The emergence of mobbing is not due to a single cause. Some of the interacting elements that constitute mobbing can be listed as the personality and psychology of the mobber, the personality and psychology of the person exposed to mobbing, organizational conditions, environmental factors and triggering event (Davenport et al. 2003).

As the reasons for the emergence of mobbing is not the only one, and the results and effects will not be the only one. This study aimed to put a spotlight on the relationship between mobbing and organizational commitment, and the effects and consequences of mobbing on organizational commitment in a conceptual manner. In this context, the concept of mobbing and its related elements will be examined, organizational commitment will be emphasized, the effects of these two concepts in action will be examined through conceptual analysis and literature review.

2. WHAT IS MOBBING?

Bullying, intimidation and emotional harassment in the workplace, or mobbing (bullying) with its internationally accepted name, is the persistent, systematic, humiliating, contemptuous, intimidating, unfair words and behaviors that a person or a group applies to the target person. As a result of this abuse of power, the targeted person feels upset, threatened, excluded, humiliated, and injured, his self-confidence is shaken, he begins to doubt his abilities and is under great stress. The wounds he receives cause all kinds of psychological disorders and physical diseases, and some of them become unable to work. The result is definitely quitting or being fired (Arpacioğlu, 2008: 4).

Intimidation actions, which can be applied in different ways, actively or passively in business life, are available in both public and private enterprises in our country. On the other hand, it is difficult to say that it is easily noticed by managers or related circles. Considering that the actions are mostly done by the administrators, it becomes more difficult to reveal and prove. There are observable differences

between a knitting organization that has a healthy working environment and an organization that is exposed to mobbing. The table below compares these differences. (Tinaz, 2006: 36)

Healthy Work Environment	Mobbing Environment
Roles and job descriptions are clear.	Roles are ambiguous.
There are cooperative relationships.	Uncooperative relationships prevail.
Goals are common and shared.	It is impossible to see ahead.
Relationships are open.	Relationships are uncertain.
It has a healthy organizational structure.	There are organizational deficiencies.
Sometimes there can be conflicts and frictions.	Prolonged and unethical reactions are observed.
The strategies are clear and candid.	Strategies are meaningless.
Conflicts and arguments are welcome.	The existence of conflict is denied and hidden.
There is direct communication.	There is an indirect and sloppy communication.

Table 1. Differences between Conflict and Mobbing (Psychological Violence) Environments

Source: Tinaz, 2006, p36

It is also possible to draw a conclusion from this table that the mobbing environment brings with it an uncertain communication environment like chaos. Many organizational disruptions and reactions against organizational ethics, as well as an organizational atmosphere that is not transparent and based on denial, can be counted among the evidence of mobbing in the organization.

2.1 Characteristics of Persons Performing Mobbing in Organizations

Those who apply mobbing may have some characteristics (Tutar, 2005). In general, the perpetrator of mobbing has an antipathic and sadistic personality, believes that he is privileged and indispensable, shows a paranoid oppressive mood, has a narcissistic structure, believes that he has a corporate identity. In addition, these people are prejudiced and emotional, inflexible and try to make their own norms organizational policy.

2.2 Administrative and Organizational Reasons for Mobbing

Some of the administrative and organizational reasons that cause mobbing can be expressed as follows (Shallcross, 2003:7; Tinaz, 2006:4):

- Excessive hierarchical structure
- Harassment is used as a tool to ensure discipline within the organization, increase efficiency and accordingly create conditioned reflexes.
- Reducing expenditure on human resources
- Ineffective functioning of intra-organizational communication channels
- Weakness of conflict resolution ability or ineffective conflict management in the organization
- Poor leadership
- Little or no teamwork
- Ignoring educational differences
- Bad management
- Implementation of the closed-door policy

- Intense stressful workplace
- Monotony
- Managers' disbelief or denial of the existence of mobbing
- Immoral practices
- Downsizing, restructuring etc. reasons
- Incorrect personnel selection and recruitment process
- High tendency to find scapegoats

2.3 Effects of Mobbing on the Sufferer

According to Walter, there are some personal and psychological problems that the mobbing sufferer is likely to experience. The individual shows signs of illness, gets sick, does not come to work, and is dismissed. The individual experiences intense stress and accordingly psychosomatic symptoms occur. Sometimes he experiences severe depression, may contemplate suicide or even attempt suicide. Under the influence of this mood, he defines his role as a back role and says, "They don't take me in." He believes he is not guilty, on the other hand, he thinks he always does everything wrong. Due to this intense pressure environment, he does not have self-confidence and is in a general indecision. Ultimately, he may reject any responsibility or hold himself responsible for everything (Walter, 1993; Quoted in; Tınaz, 2006: 95)

3. THE CONCEPT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Commitment as a concept and a form of understanding is an emotional expression of social instinct. Loyalty, which is one of the strongest emotions of human beings, also expresses our commitment to a person, an idea, an institution, or a phenomenon that we consider bigger than ourselves, and an obligation we have to fulfill (Ergun, 1975: 98).

Organizational commitment is both one of the main activities and one of the ultimate goals of organizations' efforts to protect their assets. Because individuals with organizational commitment are more harmonious, more satisfied, more productive, they work with a higher sense of loyalty and responsibility, and cause less cost in the organization (Balci, 2003: 27). Organizational commitment generally refers to an individual's psychological commitment to the organization, including work involvement, loyalty, and belief in organizational values

3.1 Factors Affecting Organizational Commitment

Northcraft and Neale analyzed the factors affecting organizational commitment by dividing them into 3 groups as individual, organizational, and external factors. (Northcraft and Neale, 1990)

-Personal Factors: Individual characteristics include some demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, length of stay in the organization, and the duration of being in a certain position (Sağlam, Arı and Ergeneli, 2003: 132).

-Factors Related to Organizational Structure: These factors are; size and structure of the organization, working conditions and working hours, career opportunities, leadership style, unionization rate, organizational image, total quality management practices, promotion opportunities, wage amounts and wage system, non-wage benefits, reward system, performance system, management style and are some situations and features arising from the organization, such as opportunities to participate in management and organizational culture. (Sağlam, Arı and Ergeneli, 2003:132; Koç and Yavuz, 2007)

-Extra-Organizational Factors: Non-organizational factors that affect organizational commitment can be sorted as professionalism, new job opportunities, sector status, socio-economic status of the country, unemployment rate, etc.

3.2 Consequences of Organizational Commitment

A high level of organizational commitment provides various benefits to organizations. Among these, high productivity, quality production, effective bottom-up communication, and high level of loyalty to the organization can be counted (Randall, 1987: 464).

It is thought that the members with high commitment to the organization will exert efforts to protect the interests of the organization and achieve its goals at the same rate. It is assumed that high efficiency can be achieved through the staff's efforts to be permanent in the organization for the desired level of commitment. In general, the relationship between job performance and organizational commitment is reciprocal and moderate, and it is argued that the relationship with performance is significantly high because commitment determines the norms of role behavior such as supervisors and work groups (Balay, 2000: 84).

It is seen that high commitment has some benefits as well as some costs for the organization (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982: 142). From the organizational point of view, it is very advantageous to have a workforce connected to the organization. However, it is stated that blind commitment to the organization may lead employees to accept the status quo, and therefore may cause the organization to lose its ability to adapt to change and to innovate (Meyer and Allen, 1991: 8)

When it comes to the effect of attachment to the organization on the behavior of the employee, four types of output can be mentioned: (Balci, 2003: 28)

1. Those who are fully committed to the goals and values of the organization participate actively in organizational activities.
2. Employees who dedicate themselves to the organization generally have a strong desire to stay in the organization and contribute to the achievement of the goals of the organization.
3. It is seen that the relationship between organizational commitment and leaving the job is consistent and inverse.
4. While job satisfaction gives important findings about turnover at the beginning, as time passes, commitment becomes a stronger predictor of turnover than satisfaction.

4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOBBING AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Many field studies have been conducted to reveal the effects of mobbing and organizational commitment. The general conclusion of these studies is that there is an inverse relationship between the mobbing perception of the employees and the level of organizational commitment. Where intimidation is felt, the ties of individuals with the organization weaken, organizational interests begin to be left in the background, and the work peace of the organization begins to disappear. This atmosphere of tension creates heavy costs for both the employee and the organization. The above-mentioned contrasting relationship manifests itself not only in organizational commitment, but also in the context of performance. According to the results of the regression analysis carried out to reveal the relationship between mobbing and performance, behaviors carried out in the form of attacks on reputation negatively affect performance (Demir and Çavuş, 2009:15).

The formation of organizations, their survival, and their ability to act in line with a goal and focus on success are primarily possible with the "human" factor. Therefore, providing a suitable work environment for the employees in the organization to show their qualifications and qualifications is extremely important for the success of the organization. Providing all these will increase the employee's commitment to the organization, so the employee's performance will change positively. In this context, it is clear that mobbing felt by employees of the organization poses a significant threat to the organization. Mobbing perceptions of employees adversely affect their organizational commitment, especially their emotional commitment. All mobbing behaviors primarily affect emotional commitment (Karcıoğlu and Çelik, 2012:73)

The attitudes of employees exposed to mobbing towards their organizations are negatively affected. Among these attitudes, the employee's commitment to the organization is the most negatively affected. Various studies reveal that mobbing has negative effects on emotional commitment within the dimensions of organizational commitment (Breen and McNamara, 2004: 35).

Mobbing can have very negative effects on businesses in terms of productivity and job satisfaction of employees. Creativity is restricted due to the reluctance to work in individuals due to low job satisfaction. As a result of psychological harassment in the workplace, the attention of the employees is distracted from the goals of the organization and the importance of their own duties. Not only the employees who are exposed to mobbing, but also those who witness the events in the process lose their trust in the organization, thinking that they will be exposed to mobbing one day. As a natural consequence of developing events, there is a significant decrease in organizational commitment and job commitment attitudes. While the harmony between the employees deteriorates, an atmosphere of complete distrust occurs (Tinaz, 2006: 157).

One of the factors that play an active role in the survival of an organization and making its vision and mission real is commitment to the goals of the organization. This can be both material and emotional. Commitment to the goals of the organization is related to organizational commitment. Employees with high organizational commitment are expected to be more willing and diligent in reaching their goals (Ertan, 2008: 7). Employees with high organizational commitment have a low tendency to quit their job and show higher performance, increasing the importance of organizational commitment (Stup, 2006: 1).

The important aspect of organizational commitment is that employees who adopt the values of the organization and make efforts to achieve organizational goals contribute to organizational effectiveness and productivity. Keeping such employees in the organization, first of all, provides important advantages to the organization by ensuring that customer expectations are better met and service quality is increased (Tolay, 2003; 2). Tolay's assessment may mean that as a result of the decrease in organizational commitment, a process that will lead to the loss of loyal and loving employees and in a sense, will lead to the decrease in the overall quality of the organization.

Committed employees strongly believe in the goals and values of the organization and voluntarily follow orders and expectations. These members also put forth an effort beyond the minimum expectations and are determined to stay in the organization in order to achieve the goals in the desired way. Committed employees are intrinsically motivated. Their intrinsic rewards come from the action itself and its successful results rather than the conditions controlled by others (Balay, 2000: 3) In this case, we can say that after the decrease in commitment to the organization, disobedience, rebelliousness, neglect of work, self-isolation and alienation from the organization may occur in the context of employees.

According to Balay, organizational commitment has become a vital issue for organizations for five reasons. This concept is connected firstly, with the activities of quitting, absenteeism, withdrawal and job seeking, and secondly with attitudinal, emotional and cognitive structures such as job satisfaction, retention, morale and performance; thirdly, with features related to the job and role of the employee such as autonomy, responsibility, participation, sense of duty; fourthly with the personal characteristics of the employees such as age, gender, length of service and education, and finally, with knowing the predictors of organizational commitment that individuals have (Balay, 2000: 1).

From this point of view, organizational commitment feeds the lifeblood of the organization. Since mobbing will weaken the ties of the employees to the organization, it will begin to eliminate any benefit that loyalty provides to the organization. In this case, an alienation process that gradually emerges within the organization and spreads among the employees may begin. In this process, as mobbing continues, organizational commitment will decrease and it will leave its place to an environment where there is no job satisfaction, morale and performance; thus, the level of responsibility and participation of employees decreases, and there is a stressful structure where there is a mass of employees trying to find an alternative job to leave the organization and no one is actually satisfied.

5. CONCLUSION

The human factor is of primary importance on the basis of the success of organizations. It is the human element that enables organizations to be established, to function, and to mobilize them for certain purposes. Therefore, the higher the qualification of the individual is, the more effective the organization will be. In this context, it should be emphasized once again that mobbing is a phenomenon that takes place entirely in the workplace. As a result of the evaluations made on this subject, it was seen that there is a significant relationship between mobbing in the workplace, job stress and job performance.

Considering that the employees are exposed to mobbing due to the stressful work environment, managers should be informed about job enrichment, creating a positive organizational climate, preventing role conflicts, making communication channels transparent, giving importance to the needs of employees and making efforts to solve them, sources of stress and stress management. They must manage stress in the workplace, such as by providing employee training on stress management. (Iron, Sergeant, 2009: 18)

Adams (1992) and Crawford (1997) provided useful case studies of the organizational effects of emotional harassment in the workplace. Adams emphasized that emotional harassment and aggression in the workplace cause costly consequences such as illness, low morale, decreased productivity, high turnover rates, intense job stress and poor job performance. In this context, educating and enlightening employees about emotional attack in their own work environment is suggested as an important solution for them to protect themselves when they are exposed to harassment.

It would be correct to say that it is possible to increase organizational commitment by combating mobbing, which has an opposite correlation with organizational commitment. In order to prevent mobbing in businesses, the vision and mission of the business should be clearly stated and understood by everyone.

Considering that the employees are exposed to mobbing due to the stressful work environment, managers should be informed about job enrichment, creating a positive organizational climate, preventing role conflicts, making communication channels transparent, giving importance to the needs of the employees and making efforts to solve them, eliminating stress sources and providing stress management training. In order for the communication process in businesses to be effective, an honest organizational climate should be created. Since a significant part of mobbing behaviors are carried out by superiors to their subordinates and take place within the organization, planning effective in-house training activities and dictating the possible harms of mobbing to all employees of the organization can ensure that an anti-mobbing readiness is developed within the organization and an invasive reflex is formed against mobbing.

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