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**MOBBING AT BANKS:  
Moderating Effect of Negative Emotions on the Relationship between Mobbing and Turnover Intention<sup>1</sup>****Meltem Idig-Camuroglu, PhD***Lecturer, Ipek University, Psychology Department, Ankara, Turkey*[mcamuroglu@ipek.edu.tr](mailto:mcamuroglu@ipek.edu.tr)**Jale Minibas-Poussard, PhD***Professor, Galatasaray University, Business Administration Department, Istanbul, Turkey*[jminibas@gsu.edu.tr](mailto:jminibas@gsu.edu.tr)**ABSTRACT**

While it is not always possible to prevent mobbing in organizations, individuals can be empowered to cope with it by regulating emotions. The purpose of this study was to explore mobbing and turnover intention in banking sector and to examine the moderating effect of negative emotions. Survey approach and free association technique were used with participants who were 164 bank employees in Istanbul, Turkey. Findings revealed that prevalence of mobbing is 30%. The most frequent aggressive behaviors are threats to individual's personal and work reputation. As the environment is perceived more negative, perceived mobbing increases. With the high levels of mobbing negative emotions increase and turnover intentions arise. Negative emotions moderated the relationship between mobbing and turnover intention. Employees with high negative emotions showed more turnover intention when mobbing increased. Effective coping with mobbing is essential for individuals and organizations since it increases negative affect and turnover intentions in employees. This findings also underlines the importance of anti-bullying policies. To our knowledge, this paper examined the moderating effect of negative emotions on the relationship between mobbing and turnover for the first time.

**Keywords:** Aggression, Mobbing/Bullying, Negative emotions, Banking sector, Turnover intention.

**INTRODUCTION**

As an important psychosocial problem, mobbing or bullying at work can be defined as systematic hostile manners and behaviors perpetuated by one or more persons towards another employee for a long time. Leymann (1996b) defined mobbing as a type of conflict in which victims are subjected to a stigmatization process and the encroachment of their civil rights. According to Leymann, this must occur at least once a week and over a period of at least six months.

There are numerous definitions to list, however they have several common characteristics: aggressive behavior, repetition, duration in time and lack of power balance. A hostile and destructive aim is prominent in mobbing. While Leymann (1996b) applies the criterion of one aggressive behavior to diagnose mobbing, other researchers (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2000; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007; Salin, 2001) apply the criterion of at least two hostile behaviors occurring. The second component for diagnosing mobbing, that is, repetition or frequency of aggressive behaviors, must be at least once a week. In order to constitute a destructive process, these behaviors must occur more than once, and as we just mentioned some researchers do not accept one single aggressive behavior as mobbing (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007). On the third element, duration in time, researchers generally agree on at least six months (Hoel, Cooper & Faragher, 2001; Leymann, 1996a; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2001; Zapf, Knorz & Kulla, 1996). Finally, inequality of power between the parties plays an essential role in definition of mobbing (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003). This lack of equality exists either at the beginning or during the process (Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007). Power distribution is never equal in organizations and this may lead to the victimization of less powered positions. Nevertheless, mobbing may start between equal parties and lead to one of the two being diminished, or, as some researchers have demonstrated, superiors may be the victims of mobbing by their subordinates (Hoel, Cooper & Faragher, 2001).

Leymann (1996b) sorted the mobbing types into five categories; (i) threats to victim's communication (silent treatment, interrupted when speaking, not been listened to etc.), (ii) threats to victim's maintaining social contacts (being isolated in a room from others, not being talked to etc.), (iii) threats to victim's personal (been subjected to rumors, been blamed for other people's mistakes ...) and (iv) occupational reputation (not being given any work tasks, etc.), and finally (v) threats to victim's physical health (been given dangerous work tasks, been threatened with physical harm or been physically harmed, been sexually assaulted etc.). Later on Baron,

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Neuman and Geddes (1999) proposed a categorization of aggressive workplace behaviors: (a) expressions of hostility (e.g. hostile verbal or symbolic behaviors, such as “the silent treatment”), (b) obstructionism (i.e., behaviors that are designed to hamper the victim’s performance, such as refusing to provide needed resources), and (c) overt aggression (e.g. assaults).

Mobbing can happen in any workplace, at any sector, however, international data (Hubert & Veldhoven, 2001) showed that risk sectors are industry, education, health and insurance and banking (Davenport, Schwartz & Elliot, 2002).

#### *Antecedents of Mobbing*

Many writers offered different reasons for aggressive behaviors at the workplace. Baumeister, Smart & Oden (1996) argued that the reason for which people seek hostile and aggressive behaviors is to protect their threatened egoism and narcissism. Wyatt and Hare (1997) also suggested that perpetrators may have narcissistic personality disorder or may have suffered as victims of child abuse in their past.

On the other hand, Leymann (1996a) proposed four main reasons for mobbing; forcing somebody to obey a group rule, being fond of hostility, searching for satisfaction and reinforcing prejudice. Although the type of behaviors and their reasons vary across research, Leymann (1990) stated that real harm of mobbing is caused by frequency of behavior, situation in which mobbing occurs, power gap between victim and perpetrator, lack of a possible escape, and victim’s attribution of offenders’ intention.

Zapf and Einarsen (2011) listed the individual antecedents of mobbing as: (i) personal retaliation to protect self-esteem, (ii) lack of social competencies and (iii) organizational micro-politics (bullying in order to protect or improve one’s own position).

Several organizational and managerial reasons for mobbing are identified by different researchers such as; stress level at work environment (Baillien, De Cuyper & De Witte, 2011; Hauge, Skogstad & Einarsen, 2009), stress level at work and competitive and tense atmosphere (O’Moore *et al.*, 1998; Vartia, 1996), low job satisfaction and weak social climate (Einarsen, Raknes & Matthiesen 1994; Keashly & Jagatic, 2003; Vartia, 1996), excessive workloads and unappreciated work (Leymann, 1996b), conflicts at workplace (Zapf, Knorz and Kulla, 1996) injustice (Greenberg & Barling, 1999; Neuman & Baron, 2003), negativity during reorganization processes (Baron & Neuman, 1996, 1998; Baillien & De Witte 2009) and work focused leadership, strict hierarchy and lack of social support (Baillien *et al.*, 2008). Nonetheless some authors (Einarsen, 1999; Robinson & O’Leary-Kelly, 1998) claimed that mobbing becomes prevalent in organizational cultures which have no politics or systems to reprove and prevent mobbing as well as other cultures considering mobbing as normal and acceptable.

#### *Outcomes of Mobbing*

A number of studies have asserted that a relationship exists between being subject to mobbing and impaired health. Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2003) identified three general reaction groups of targets: In the first group, vague physical symptoms like chronic fatigue, various aches and loss of strength were observed. The second group showed depressive signs such as insomnia, lack of self-esteem and indifference. The final group portrayed more severe psychological symptoms like irritability, hypersensitivity, hostility, memory problems, and feelings of victimization, nervousness and social withdrawal.

A more recent study disclosed that targets developed psychological and psychosomatic symptoms a few months later the onset of mobbing (Hallberg & Strandmark, 2006). Although the targets were only symptomatic when at work at the beginning, they became more chronic in a few months regardless of the context.

When mobbing lasts a long period, research revealed that it has severe consequences on victims’ psychological and psychosomatic health (Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002). Depending on the criteria stated above (Leymann, 1996a,b), its results can fluctuate from dissatisfaction with the job to posttraumatic stress disorder and depression (Matthiesen, & Einarsen, 2004). In addition to these symptoms, high rates of absenteeism and frequent turnovers in workplace become an extra stress factor for the other employees.

In general, literature on outcomes of mobbing emphasizes that mobbing affects not only the targets but also the other employees, organizations and even the economics of the country. Hoel *et al.*, (2011) demonstrated how mobbing victims become less productive, show less initiative, are less creative and make mistakes. Decreased efficiency can be explained by the negative effects of mobbing process on victim’s job satisfaction, motivation

and attachment. In addition, perceived stress also negatively affects productivity, while social isolation and lack of communication prevents the victim from accessing necessary information to be productive. Third parties are also affected in terms of productivity. Victim's communication about their experience and related rumors in the organization increase the general stress level in employees (Vartia, 2001).

High levels of stress creates an atmosphere in which employees have no confidence in the organization in terms of managing and preventing mobbing. Hoel *et al.*, (2011) revealed the correlation between mobbing and turnover intention. In some cases, leaving may seem the best solution since it eliminates the source of the problem. For some others, it may be inevitable because of long term health problems.

Olafsson and Johannsdottir (2004), stated that victims have different coping strategies in relation with their personal characteristics. Victims with high levels of anxiety and low self-esteem are less successful at coping (Einarsen & Mikkelsen, 2003; Randall 2001). In cases of severe mobbing, Forte, Przygodzki-Lionet & Masclat (2006) determined that, victims tend to respond emotion focused more than the other strategies. On the other hand, according to Machin and Hoare (2008) maladaptive coping strategies may explain negative affect. Casimir *et al.* (2012) demonstrated the correlation between bullying and negative affect. Hansen *et al.* (2006) show that bullied respondents reported more negative affect than did the non-bullied respondents. Supporting the sequence, Djurkovic, McCormack and Casimir (2006) determined that bullying behaviors act on negative affect.

#### *The purpose and hypotheses of study*

The present study aims firstly to explore the representations of aggression, kind and actors of aggression and to determine the frequency of mobbing. Our second objective is to analyze aggressive behaviors in relation to work context. The third objective is to search the reactions of victims to mobbing. The fourth and the last objective is to analyze the moderating role of negative emotions between mobbing and turnover intention.

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1: Mobbing will be positively correlated with turnover intention.

H2: Mobbing will be positively correlated with negative emotions.

H3: Negative emotions will moderate the relationship between mobbing and turnover intention.

## **Method**

### *Sample*

The participants were employees of ten private banks in Istanbul, Turkey. The respondents were initially contacted via a letter informing them that a research was being conducted for academic purposes in order to improve the understanding of some of human behavior at work. Participants were assured about confidentiality of their responses. Those who accepted to join (164) are interviewed by the researchers. Seventy nine percent were between 26 and 35 years old and 20% were between 36 and 45. The majority of the sample (66%) was female and 34% was male. Seventy five percent were university graduates, 20% had a master's degree and only 5% were high school graduates. In terms of banking experience, the majority (68%) had over 5 years, the remaining 32% had less than 5 years. In terms of positions 16% were employees, 24% supervisors, 25% low and 30% middle level managers.

### *Measures*

The questionnaire presented to participants was in six parts:

- *Social representations of aggression in the workplace:* The structure of social representations was assessed using a word association technique (also called evocation task, see Vergès & Bastounis, 2001). Participants were asked to provide word associations to the notions of "aggression in workplace" and "reasons of aggression in workplace".
- *Kinds and actors of mobbing:* A 5-point scale of 35 items was constituted to determine the kinds and actors of aggression. This scale was inspired by the scales developed by Leymann (1996b) and Neumann & Keashly (2004). Example items: "Been glared at in hostile manner." "Had others fail to give you information that you really needed." Cronbach alpha of the scale is .94.
- *Turnover intention:* A 5-point Thurstone scale of one statement was used: "To what extent did you think of quitting your job after being subjected to mobbing?"
- *Work context evaluation:* A 5-point scale of ten items was used to evaluate stress, conflict, work overloads, working with insufficient manpower and material, oppressing management, lack of confidence, powerlessness, ambiguity, injustice and lack of success feeling. Example item: "My job is stressful". Cronbach alpha of the scale is .93.

- *Negative emotions*: The negative emotion subscale (low arousal emotions) of the Job Related Well-being Scale (Van Katwyk *et al.*, 2000) was used. Example item: “My job made me feel bored”. Cronbach alpha of the subscale is .92.

## Results

### *Social representations concerning aggression and its causes in workplace*

Data analysis was conducted according to the word rank by frequency model. The mean frequency and mean rank were calculated for each evocation (different word associated to the target word). Thus, the dictionary (which includes all the evocations obtained from the task) was organized into four groups of evocations: (a) words appearing with high frequency and low mean rank (e.g. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>), (b) high frequency and high mean rank (e.g. 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>), (c) low frequency and low mean rank, (d) low frequency and high mean rank. The structural approach to the study of social representations postulates that the first group of evocations, that is, the one containing associations which are spontaneously made most frequently first, describes the central nucleus of the structure of the representation. By central nucleus, researchers refer to widely shared core elements that identify the object of the representation in a more stable manner (Vergès, 1994).

“Shouting” behavior is in the central nucleus and in the first rank. It is followed by “humiliating” and “insulting” behaviors. Pressure in the work place is also regarded as an aggression factor (see Table 1).

**Table 1:** Structure of free associations to “aggression in workplace”

	<i>Mean Rank</i>	
	<i>MR &lt; 2.5</i>	<i>MR &gt; 2.5</i>
<i>High frequency</i> <i>F &gt; 10</i>	Shouting (37) Humiliating (21) Insulting (18) Pressure (14)	Contempt (14) Assault (14) Stress (13)
<i>Low frequency</i> <i>F &lt; 10</i>	Discomfort (9) Jealousy (9) Disrespect (9) Psychological pressure (7) Ambition (7) Low performance (5) Irritability (5)	Envy (9) Depreciate (8) Teasing (6) Criticizing (5) Oppressing (5)

In the analysis of representations of causes for aggression in workplace, “stress” comes as first. Subsequent causes are mostly individual characteristics like lack of self-confidence, jealousy, incompetency, competition and lack of knowledge.

**Table 2:** Structure of free associations to “causes of aggression in workplace”

	<i>Mean Rank</i>	
	<i>MR &lt; 2.2</i>	<i>MR &gt; 2.2</i>
<i>High frequency</i> <i>F &gt; 10</i>	Stress (25) Lack of self-confidence (21) Jealousy (20) Incompetency (20) Competition (13) Lack of knowledge (12)	Personality (25) Inferiority complex (15) Management (12) Workloads (12) Dissatisfaction (10)
<i>Low frequency</i> <i>F &lt; 10</i>	Envy (9) Unfair management (8) Fear (8) Authority (8) Emergent tasks (7) Education (7) Disrespect (7) Lack of communication (6) Private life (5)	Injustice (9) Indigestion (9) Personal problems (9) Unhappiness (9) Pressure (7) Benefit (7) Show of strength (5) Marginalizing (5)

*Mobbing behaviors and aggressors*

The most frequent twelve aggressive behaviors we determined via mobbing scale are presented in Table 3. The focus of the aggression is the work of the victim. For example, “not giving the praise to the person entitled to it”, “ignoring the person’s contributions”, “giving simple or unnecessary tasks, giving unreasonable workloads or deadlines—more than others”, “subjecting to unfair evaluation or no evaluation at all”. These aggressive behaviors are threats to the victim's personal and occupational reputation.

**Table 3:** Twelve most frequent aggressive behaviors

In the last twelve months	experienced a few times	experienced frequently	experienced always
Not been given the praise for which you felt entitled	20%	19.5%	11%
Had your contributions ignored by others	20.7%	16.5%	13.5%
Been given simple or unnecessary tasks	25%	20%	12.8%
Been given unreasonable workloads or deadlines-more than others	20%	19.5%	11%
Been subjected to unfair evaluation or no evaluation at all	16%	19.5%	8.5%
Had someone else impounded for your success or ideas	17.7%	13.4%	7.9%
Had others fail to give you information that you really needed	19.5%	14.6%	5.5%
Been subjected to excessively harsh criticism about your work	18.3%	10.4%	7.3%
Had others delay action on matters that were important to you	16.5%	10.4%	4.3%
Had others permanently objected your ideas and decisions	17.7%	11%	4.3%
Had others blocked your expression, interrupted speech and not been listened to	25%	10%	5.5%
Not been given any task or had others blocked you taking a task	17%	11%	2,4%

The prevalence of mobbing in this sample is 30% using Leymann’s criteria (at least once a week, and at least six months duration).

More than twelve aggressive behaviors were checked mostly by managers. Frequency was between 45% and 93%. The most frequent aggressive behavior by managers is “not been given the praise to which you felt entitled.” On the other hand, the frequency of coworkers’ aggressive behavior was relatively low (between 3% and 40%). The most frequent behavior by coworkers was “had someone else impounded for your success or ideas”.

*Socio-demographic comparisons*

According to the results, employees and supervisors were exposed to mobbing more than managers ( $F=2.23$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Moreover, female employees declared more mobbing than males ( $F=12.90$ ,  $p \leq .001$ ). As experience in position increased, being subjected to mobbing decreased ( $F=4.5$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ).

*Mobbing and work context evaluation*

As employees evaluated their working environment more negative, they felt they received more aggressive behaviors ( $r=.61$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ). Stress ( $r=.28$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), conflicted atmosphere ( $r=.56$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), ambiguity ( $r=.38$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), work overloads ( $r=.47$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), working with insufficient manpower and material ( $r=.45$ ,  $p \leq .05$ ), oppressing

management ( $r=.59, p\leq.05$ ), powerlessness ( $r=.54, p\leq.05$ ), unfair evaluation ( $r=.45, p\leq.05$ ), lack of confidence ( $r=.52, p\leq.05$ ), and lack of success feelings ( $r=.39, p\leq.05$ ) in working environment bring about stronger sense of mobbing.

According to multiple regression results ( $R= .75, R^2= .57, F= 9.6, p\leq 001$ ), stress ( $\beta= .28$ ), work overloads ( $\beta= .29$ ), oppressing management ( $\beta= .21$ ), lack of confidence ( $\beta= .27$ ) and unfair evaluation ( $\beta= .39$ ) are the factors which have more negative impact on mobbing.

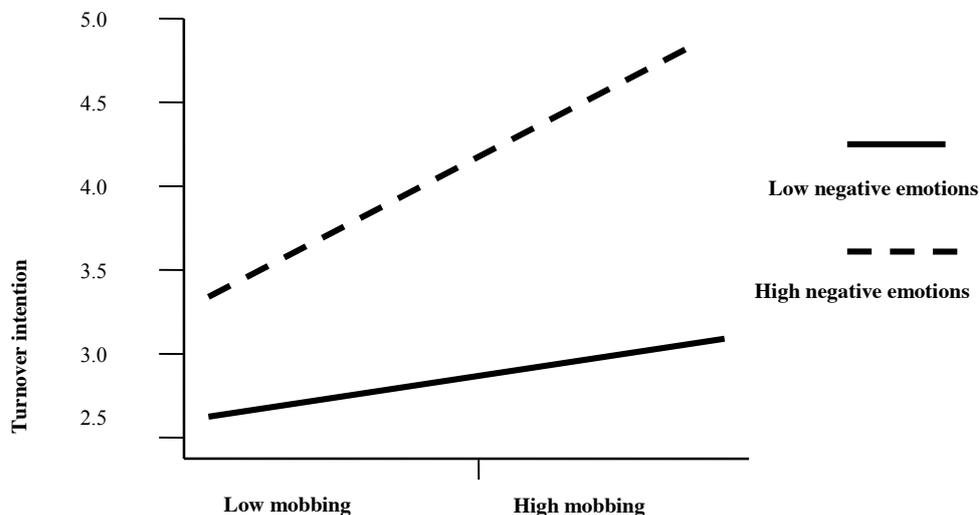
*Reactions to mobbing and emotions*

Eighty four percent of mobbing victims communicated their discomfort in their workplace but only 21% filed a complaint. Forty five percent of them faced the aggressors. Most of the victims stated that the witnesses did nothing (42% indifferent and 30% neutral), and only 27% gave support.

As mobbing increased, turnover intention also increased ( $r=.50, p\leq.05$ ).

As employees received more aggression they had more negative emotions ( $r=.59, p\leq.05$ ). Negative emotions are being more gloomy ( $r=.38, p\leq.05$ ), furious ( $r=.51, p\leq.05$ ), frightened ( $r=.51, p\leq.05$ ), tired ( $r=.23, p\leq.05$ ), disgusted ( $r=.57, p\leq.05$ ), discouraged ( $r=.43, p\leq.05$ ), depressed ( $r=.43, p\leq.05$ ), bored ( $r=.49, p\leq.05$ ), anxious ( $r=.37, p\leq.05$ ) and angry ( $r=.43, p\leq.05$ ). Individuals with low negative emotions had more social support ( $F=14.54, p\leq.05$ ).

The moderation effect of negative emotions on the relationship between mobbing and turnover intention was significant. When negative emotions were high (one SD above the mean), the relationship between received aggression and turnover intention was significant ( $R=.23, R^2=.05, F=4.3, \beta=.23, p\leq 05$ ; see Figure 1). But it was not significant when negative emotions were low.



**Figure 1.** Moderating effect of negative emotions on the relationship between mobbing and turnover intention.

**Discussion**

Following the economic crisis in Turkey, the banking sector has become extraordinarily stressful. Employees have to work unusually extended working hours as well as discharges of employees and transitions among banks have increased. As conjectural and economic situation of the country prepares “legitimate” grounds for stress in the banks, mobbing may even get into higher levels in the future.

Our aim in this study was to explore the perceptions, frequency, actors and responses of employees to aggression in the banking sector. Exposed mobbing rate was 30% when measured the with Leymann’s criteria (at least once a week, and at least six months duration). Females and employees were found being more mobbed than men and superiors. The most frequent hostile behaviors that participants chose from the mobbing scale were “not giving the praise to the person entitled to it”, “ignoring the person’s contributions”, “giving simple or unnecessary tasks, giving unreasonable workloads or deadlines—more than others”, “subjecting to unfair evaluation or no evaluation at all”. These aggressive behaviors were threats to the victim's personal and occupational reputation.

The mobbing rate in our study is parallel with many studies conducted in Turkey. Gök (2011), for example, investigated the exposure of banking employees to mobbing and found out that 32% of the participants were victims during entire working life and 16% were mobbed last year. Compared to some other Turkish studies conducted in different sectors, our results show parallel or lower percentages (Bilgel, Aytac & Bayram, 2006; Soylu, Peltek & Aksoy, 2008; Yıldız, 2007). However this ratio is much higher compared to West Europe countries (Sweden 1.7-16%, Denmark 2-13%, Germany 2.7-10,8%, Netherlands 1-4,4%.) in which it ranges between 1-16% (Zapf *et al.*, 2011). As we move to Eastern Europe, results become similar to our study; in Bosnia Herzegovina 26% (Pranjic *et al.*, 2006), Croatia 22,4% (Russo *et al.*, 2008), Greece 30% (Apospori and Papalexanderis, 2008). In the United States researchers obtained higher rates as well; varying between 25- 36% (Keashly and Neuman, 2002; Lutgen-Sandvik, Tracy & Alberts, 2007).

Main aggressors in our study were managers. Similar to the findings of most other studies (Hoel Cooper & Faragher, 2001; Leymann, 1996a,b; Marais-Steinman, 2003; Spector *et al.*, 2007).

The aggressive behaviors we determined were in general threats to victim's personal and occupational reputation. Our data is similar to Gök's (2011) results and also parallel with Sweden (Leymann, 1996b), France (Hirigoyen, 2001), England (Hoel, Cooper & Faragher, 2001), Finland (Salin, 2001; Vartia, 2001), Bosnian Herzegovina (Pranjic *et al.*, 2006) and other researches in Turkey (Bilgel Aytac & Bayram, 2006; Cemaloglu, 2007; Yıldız, 2007). It is quite surprising and thought provoking to get such similar results from such different cultures and business worlds.

Nonetheless, literature demonstrated that in some cases individuals may not be aware of the fact that they are exposed to mobbing. For instance; Bentley *et al.* (2012) found out that while employees complain about high levels of stress (70%), they perceived mobbing rate as 1.5% whereas it was determined 11.4% measured by mobbing scale. For this reason, we aimed to analyze the social representations of aggression by free association technique before we gave the mobbing scale to the participants. Since social representations are convenient tools for understanding the social relational dynamics (Abric, 1994), we wanted to investigate their own list of aggressive behaviors and reasons of aggression. Shouting, humiliating, insulting and pressure were the most frequent aggressive behaviors listed by the participants.

Baron and Neuman (1996) classified aggressive behaviors into two categories; verbal and physical. Further, these groups are also divided into active/passive and direct/indirect subgroups. According to this classification, our mobbing scale data is verbal, passive and indirect type of behaviors. However, social representations of aggression in our data are active and direct. Later Baron, Neuman & Geddes (1999) added implicit/explicit behaviors into their taxonomy. Implicit behaviors are verbal, passive and indirect whereas explicit ones are physical, active and indirect. They concluded that implicit behaviors are observed more frequently in mobbing process. As it can be seen in our data, the most frequent aggressive behaviors measured by the mobbing scale as; "not giving the praise to the person entitled to it", "ignoring the person's contributions", "giving simple or unnecessary tasks, giving unreasonable workloads or deadlines—more than others" and "subjecting to unfair evaluation or no evaluation at all" were not included in social representations. This contradiction can be due to not perceiving implicit behaviors as aggression. Therefore informing employees about mobbing is an essential prevention.

In terms of our second objective, results showed that negative work context is positively correlated with mobbing; as the negativity of environment increases, mobbing occurs more frequently. The most influential negative factors were stress, work overloads, oppressing management, lack of confidence and unfair evaluation of work. Leymann (1996a) emphasized the role of the excessive workloads as an important stressor leading to mobbing. In terms of managing styles, work oriented leadership, strict hierarchy and loss of social support can create learned helplessness in employee and can trigger passive-destructive mechanisms instead of an effective conflict management (Baillien *et al.*, 2008). Employees who thinks they get unjust evaluation for their effort at work may become aggressive against the source of injustice (Neuman & Baron, 2003). Perceived organizational injustice may turn into hostility at work environment (Greenberg & Barling, 1999).

According to our participants' social representations of reasons for aggression at workplace, stress was the first factor. It is demonstrated by research that bullying thrives in stressful work environments which create grounds both for bullies and victims (Baillien *et al.*, 2011; Hauge, Skogstad & Einarsen, 2009).

In the social representations, the participants referred to personal causes of mobbing such as jealousy, lack of self-confidence and incompetency more than work context. Many researchers (Baumaier, Smart & Boden

1996; Vartia, 1996; White, 2004) determined that envy is the basic reason for mobbing. Thus, our social representations data like incompetency integrates with Zapf and Einarsen's (2011) reasons for aggression; protection of self-esteem and lack of social competencies.

Our analyses supported the Hypothesis 1; mobbing increased turnover intention. Among the organizational effects of mobbing labor turnover has been subjected to many studies. Most of these researches (Djurkovic, McCormack & Casimir, 2008; Niedl, 1996; Quine, 2001; Soylu, Peltek & Aksoy, 2008) demonstrated the positive relationship between being exposed to mobbing and leaving the job.

The second hypothesis is also justified; negative emotions increased with mobbing. Many authors (Casimir *et al.* 2012; Djurkovic *et al.*, 2006; Hansen *et al.*, 2006; Soylu, Peltek & Aksoy, 2008;) demonstrated the relationship between bullying and negative affect with their studies. According to our data, when negative emotions are high the relationship between mobbing and turnover intention gets significant but not when negative emotions are low (H3 is justified). Positive and negative affect is an important sign of psychological adjustment and subjective well-being (Diener & Suh, 1997). Thus regulating emotions is crucial in establishing adaptive behavior and coping with the stress of negative emotions (Cicchetti, Akerman & Izard, 1995). Individuals with high negative affect are reported being in a constant state of stress or dissatisfaction regardless of the circumstances. They are more self-conscious and self-blaming than others and focus on negative aspects of other people and world they live in (Watson & Pennebaker, 1989). Many researches on negative affect showed that it has a negative relation with social support (Brannan *et al.*, 2013; Green, De Courville & Sadava, 2012; Zhou *et al.*, 2013) and a positive relation with stress (Green *et al.*, 2012; Hamama *et al.*, 2013). Çivitçi (2015) remarks that the positive effect of social support on perceived stress decreases with high negative affect. Mikkelsen and Einarsen (2002) studied the mediating effect of victim's negative affectivity on the relationship between workplace bullying and self-report measurements of psychological and psychosomatic health complaints.

The moderator effect of negative emotions demonstrates us the importance of managing emotions on decreasing individual outcomes of mobbing. As Wilton, Craig & Pepler (2000) stated; maladaptive emotional regulation processes may lead individuals into chronic victimization. On the individual level, familiarity and practice of coping mechanisms may empower the individual by increasing internal resources and prevents him/her from being a victim. On the managerial level, organizational preventions for managing style and stress and implementing the justice and mutual trust culture can be effective precautions for mobbing in organizations. Preventing mobbing can also avoid the high percentages of labor turnover which costs a lot to organizations and economy. Waldman *et al.* (2004) calculated the turnover costs of a medical center as about 5% of the annual operating budget. Although it differs for each organization, it cannot be denied that turnover is an important socio-economic problem.

In terms of limitations of the study; the most important limit is relatively small number of the participants. Besides, our sample consists the banking employees who work in one city only; Istanbul. Thus our sample may not be representative of Turkish bank employees. Future research should aim a larger and more equally distributed sample. Also, some further qualitative research is needed to demonstrate the specifics of the relationship between negative affect and mobbing. That is how we can improve the individual coping strategies and interventions to minimize the effects of mobbing on targets.

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