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The effect of mobbing on organizational culture and organizational justice perception of nurses

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Abstract

Feeling of insecurity and restlessness caused by mobbing behaviors, which nurses have faced, create an extremely stressful and tense environment. Therefore, fair behaviors exhibited by nurse managers affects directly culture perception of employees. This cross-sectional and descriptive study was planned to determine the effects of on organizational culture, justice perception and mobbing experienced by nurses working in hospital. Nurses, who were working in two private hospitals in Ankara, were included in the study. After the explanation about the purpose and method of the study, a written application was made to each of the hospitals, where the study would be conducted. After the permissions had been obtained, the data collection process began. The response rate was 74%; the data obtained from 125 nurses of hospital A and 169 of B were included in the analysis. Variables of the study were organizational justice, mobbing at workplace and organizational culture. Causal relationships between variables were tested using Structural Equation Modeling. Critical n-value related to the model was calculated as 162.85. There was a significant negative relationship between mobbing and culture, which were exogenous and endogenous latent variables, respectively (-0.50). Likewise, there was a significant negative relationship between mobbing and justice, which was an endogenous latent variable (-0.34). Also, there was a significant positive relationship between justice perception and organizational culture. Mobbing and justice perception, which were independent latent variables, were found to explain 0.43 of organizational culture, which was the endogenous latent variable. In accordance with structural equation modeling, the theoretical model of the study was found to be within statistically acceptable limits. Mobbing behavior nurses had faced, was found to have adverse effects on organizational culture and justice perception. Attitudes and behaviors of managers at workplace are highly important to ensure a peaceful and fair work environment. Managers should be aware of mobbing behavior exhibited at workplace, and should display the attitudes and behaviors which will prevent mobbing.

Keywords: Mobbing; organizational justice; organizational culture.

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1. Background

Leymann defines psychological violence or mobbing as “Hostile behaviors and unethical communication, which is directed in a systematic manner by one or more individuals, mainly toward one individual” (Yildirim, 2009). Mobbing at workplace has destructive effects on individual as well as on institution. First of all, insecurity and stressful environment created by the institution, generate an extremely stressful organizational climate among employees (Ekici & Beder, 2014). This climate leads each employee to feel under pressure. Therefore, psychological violence, which has been experienced since the beginning of working life, but appearance of which is avoided, and which is even ignored, adversely influences organizational culture and justice perception (Kose & Yildirim, 2013; Hutchinson et al., 2010; Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009).

Organizational justice refers to the perception of individual related to practices at an institution. Employees working at an institution, compare themselves with others. They question the conditions such as whether there is an equal pay for equal work, rules are applied to everyone equally, or distribution of roles are fair or not. During this period, the procedure is also questioned as well as importance of the outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2001). It is revealed that employees feel more satisfied with their jobs, when distributive justice (related to outcomes such as payment, reward, promotion gained in an institution), procedural justice (related to the fairness in the procedures and policies used to distribute the outcomes), interpersonal justice (related to managers’ behaviors), and thoughts that “organizational environment is fair” increase (Colquitt et al., 2001; Heponiemi et al., 2007; Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009). Fairness of behaviors exhibited by hospital managers, affects directly the culture which is perceived by employees.

Culture consists of values, understandings, beliefs and ways of thinking shared by an organization’s employees. It determines what individuals will value, about what they will disagree, how they will act in case of a dispute; and also the structure and characteristics of an organization that handles disputes (Casida, 2008). Hospitals also have a culture as individuals and their environment have. Moreover, every hospital has a particular culture. The main component that forms a hospital’s culture is the culture of environment in which managers and employees work. Managers should be very careful about the issue of culture protection and improvement in the hospital. Also, managers play a very important role in the process by which employees get the organizational culture created (Ozmen, 2006).

2. Purpose and Hypotheses of the Study

This cross-sectional and descriptive study was planned to determine the effects of mobbing on organizational culture and justice perception of nurses working in hospital. So the variables, which measured mobbing-exogenous latent variable, were isolation from work (IFW), attack on professional status (APS), attack on personality (AP) and direct negative behaviours (DNB). Mobbing-exogenous latent variable explained endogenous latent variables of the study; organizational culture and justice. Within the framework of this model, casual relationships among variables were theoretically determined and following hypotheses were developed to be tested. Besides, it was analyzed that whether there were statistically significant differences between the hospitals in organizational culture, justice perception and mobbing experienced by nurses.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) There is a statistically significant difference between two hospitals in mobbing, organizational culture and justice perception

Hypothesis 2 (H2) Does mobbing behavior have an effect on perception of organizational culture?

Hypothesis 3 (H3) Does mobbing behavior have an effect on perception of organizational justice?

Hypothesis 4 (H4) Does perception of organizational culture have an effect on organizational culture?

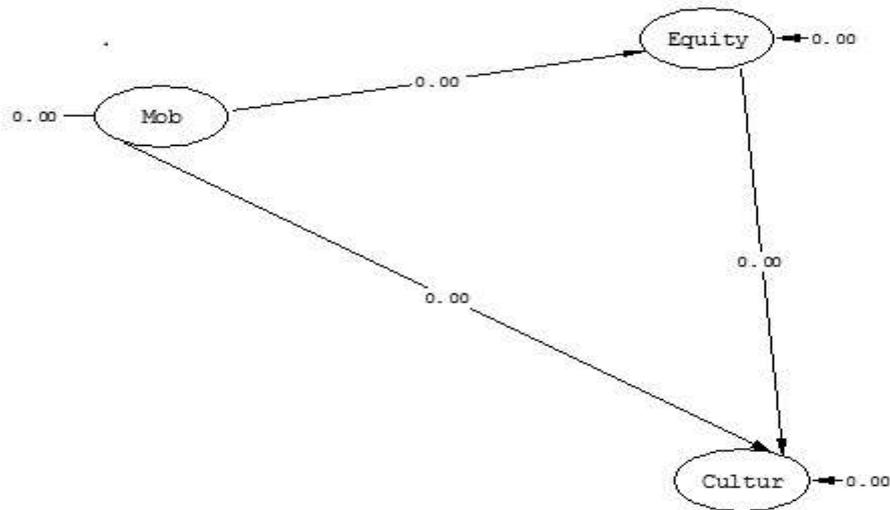


Figure 1. Path Diagram of the Structural Model

3. Population and Sample

The study included nurses who were working in two private hospitals in Ankara. We explained the purpose of the study to Nursing Service Managers of both hospitals, then made a written application. After the permissions had been obtained, we began to collect the data. The data were collected between April-June 2014. The data collection forms were distributed to 400 nurses who volunteered to participate in the study; nevertheless, 328 of them responded. The incompleting or incorrectly filled forms were excluded, and finally, the data of 294 nurses were evaluated. The response rate was 74%; the data obtained from 125 nurses of hospital A and 169 of hospital B were included in the analysis. During data collection, verbal consents of nurses were obtained after the researchers had explained the purpose of the study. Also, participants were asked not to write down their names on the forms to protect confidentiality of the data.

4. Data collection tools

Data collection tool consisted of four parts. Nurses' demographic features (age, experience, position) were questioned in the first part. In the second part, questions were related to organizational justice; in the third, they were related to mobbing behaviors at workplace; and in the last part, related to organizational culture.

4.1. Organizational justice

In order to determine nurses' perception of organizational justice, "Organizational Justice Scale (OJS)" developed by Colquitt (2001) was used. Adaptation of the scale to Turkish was validated by Ozmen et al. (2007). The scale consists of four parts; Procedural Justice (PJ) with 7 questions, Distributive Justice (DJ) with 4 questions, Interpersonal and Informative Justice (IIJ 9) with 9 questions. The first 5 questions in the third part are related to interpersonal justice and the next 4 questions are related to informative justice perception. The OJS is a 6-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicate increased perception of organizational justice. In this study, internal consistency of the scale was $\alpha=0.88$.

4.2. Mobbing at workplace

“Workplace Psychologically Violent Behaviors Instrument” developed by Dilek and Aytolan (2008) consists of 4 factors; isolation from work (IFW), attack on professional status (APS), attack on personality (AP) and direct negative behaviours (DNB). The instrument is a 6-point Likert type scale. If the result of dividing total score of an individual on the instrument by the number of items is 1 and over, it means that the individual is deliberately exposed to mobbing behaviors. In this study, internal consistency of the scale was $\alpha = 0.90$.

4.3. Organizational culture

“Organizational Culture Scale” developed by Ozenli (2006) was used to measure organizational culture. The factors analyzed in the scale are Sharing vision (SV), developing environment of trust (DET), supporting participation (SP), effective communication (EC), effective reward (EA), supporting creativity and innovation (SCI). Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale. If an individual obtains over 3,5 on the scale, it shows that organizational culture is perceived positively. In this study, internal consistency of the scale was $\alpha = 0.82$.

4.4. Ethical aspect of the study

A written application was made to each of the hospitals where the study would be conducted, after the purpose and method of the study was explained. The data collection process began, after the permissions had been obtained. Verbal consents of nurses included in the study were obtained after the researchers had explained the purpose of the study. Also, participants were asked not to write down their names on the forms to protect confidentiality of the data, and they were recommended to fill the forms in a suitable place and time for themselves. Data collection duration was determined as two weeks. After filling the forms, the participants were asked to put them in a sealed envelope and into a box placed at a certain place in the hospital.

4.5. Data analysis

In order to analyse the data, LISREL 8.80 and SPSS 20.0 software programs were used. Frequency rates of the nurses' positions and education levels; mean and standard deviations of the nurses' ages and working durations were calculated. Differences between the mean scores according to the demographic features were analyzed using independent sample t test. A 2-stepped approach was adopted in the model analysis; the measurement models and the structural model were tested separately (Loehlin, 2004). Firstly, we obtained parameter estimates of each scale, and determined the measurement models which were statistically fit by performing DFA at LISREL program. In the second phase, after causal relationships were established in the recommended theoretical model (the study model), the analysis related to the structural model was performed. During this phase, final model that explained was reestablished by excluding statistically insignificant factors from the model, and making recommended corrections in LISREL. In order to analyze the goodness-of-fit of the model, chi-square (χ^2)/Degree of Freedom (df), Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI), Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residuals (SRMR) values were calculated. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated in SPSS 20.0 program for reliability of the measurement tools.

5. Results

Of the 294 nurses participated in the study; 125 were working in hospital A (43%), 169 in hospital B (57%), 250 graduated from a university (85%), and 260 were working as clinical nurses (88%). The mean age of the nurses was 26,52 ($\pm 4,21$) years, and the mean working duration was 4,81 ($\pm 2, 18$) years.

5.1. Differences between the institutions

We found a statistically significant difference between the institutions with regard to mobbing behaviors and its dimensions ($p < 0,05$); the nurses working in the institution A were found to face mobbing behaviors more than those in the institution B (Table 1). A statistically significant difference was found between the institutions in effective reward (EA), supporting creativity and innovation (SCI) in the organizational culture ($p < 0,05$), the institution B was found to provide more effective reward and to support creativity more, compared to the institution A. No significant difference was found between the institutions in justice perception and its dimensions ($p > 0,05$). According to the study results, H1 can be partially accepted.

Table 1. Comparison of the nurses according to the institutions where they work

		Hospital A N: 125	Hospital B N: 169	t
Justice	Procedural justice	1,96±1,19	2,00±1,30	0,29**
	Distributive justice	1,90±1,36	2,20±1,55	1,71**
	Interactional justice	3,06±1,20	3,06±1,47	0,23**
	Justice total	2,50±1,17	2,37±0,86	1,46**
Mobbing	Isolation from work	1,19±1,24	0,85±1,11	1,90*
	Attack on professional status	1,63±1,43	1,21±1,14	2,84*
	Attack on personality	1,15±1,31	0,88±1,06	1,93*
	Direct negative behaviours	0,49±0,95	0,28±0,78	2,03*
	Mobbing total	1,18±1,15	0,89±0,95	2,35*
Organizational Culture	Sharing vision	3,44±1,48	3,63±1,44	1,15**
	Environment of trust	2,38±1,32	2,61±1,29	1,48**
	Participation	2,47±0,76	2,56±0,77	1,01**
	Communication	2,69±1,46	2,84±1,45	0,87**
	Reward	2,29±0,89	2,52±1,09	1,91*
	Creativity	1,91±1,16	2,21±1,27	2,07*
	Culture total	2,51±0,82	2,69±0,85	1,73**

* $p < 0,05$ ** $p > 0,05$

5.2. Results of structural equation modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is used to test an established theoretical model (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Estimation methods used in SEM differ according to sample size and normality of data distribution. Therefore, we assessed whether the data had a normal distribution or not, and found that some of the data were not normally distributed. Normalization method was used for the data which were not normally distributed, then the study model was established (Figure 1) and analyzed in LISREL 8,80. The relationships among variables that were in the study model and standardized coefficients (regression coefficients) were shown in Figure 2.

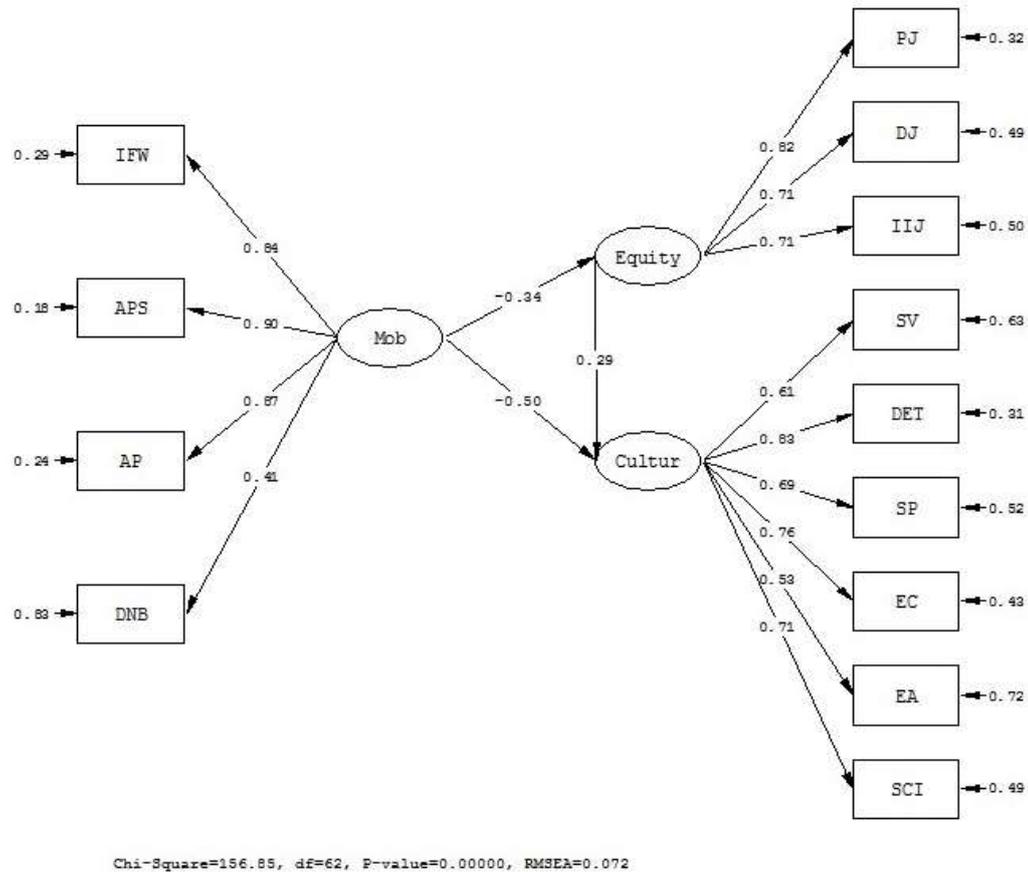


Figure 2. Relationship among variables in THE structural model AND standardized coefficients

According to the analysis; value of χ^2/df was 2.53 (156.86/63) (<3: acceptable fit) and value of RMSEA was 0.072 (acceptable fit). The other fit indices were as follows; value of Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) was 0.92 (perfect fit); value of Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI) was 0.90; (perfect fit); value of Normed Fit Index (NFI) was 0.95 (perfect fit); value of Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI) was 0.96 (perfect fit); value of Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.97 (perfect fit). Structural equations related to the model were given in Table 2. According to the results of analysis, critical N-value for the model was calculated as 162.85. This value indicated that the number of individuals participated in the study (n: 294) was sufficient. The results revealed that the fit between the theoretical model and the data was perfect.

Table 2. Structural Relationships between Mob, Equity and Culture

Structural Relationships	Standardized Loads	t-value	Hypotheses
Mob → Culture	-0.50	-6.85	H2 accepted
Mob → Equity	-0.34	-5.06	H3 accepted
Equity → Culture	0.29	4.26	H4 accepted
Structural Equations		R ²	
Equity = -0.34 x Mob		0.12	
Culture = 0.29 Equity x -0.50 Mob		0.43	

A significant negative relationship was found between mobbing and culture, which were exogenous and endogenous latent variables, respectively (-0.50). This finding indicated that 1 unit increase in mobbing behaviors caused -0.50 unit decrease in the perception of organizational culture. Likewise, a significant negative relationship was detected between mobbing and justice that was an endogenous latent variable (-0.34). This finding showed that 1 unit increase in mobbing behaviors caused -0.34 unit decrease in the perception of justice. On the other hand, there was a significant positive relationship between justice perception and organizational culture (0.29). Mobbing and justice perception, which were independent latent variables, were found to explain 0.43 of organizational culture, the endogenous latent variable, and this result was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

6. Discussion

It is accepted that mobbing acts occur at workplaces in every country of the World, in addition, recent studies conducted with various populations report that psychological violence is extremely common at workplaces and it is a very significant problem (Ekici & Beder, 2014, Kose & Yildirim, 2013). Mobbing generally includes attacks on personality and professional competence of employees, and behaviors intended to humiliate and stigmatize the victim, and to tarnish her/his image at workplace (Dilek & Aytolan, 2008). This study showed that mobbing behaviors adversely influenced perception of organizational justice, and this result is in accordance with the literature (Heponiemi et al., 2007; Hutchinson et al., 2010). We also found that the nurses working in hospital A faced mobbing behaviors more than those in hospital B.

Attitudes and behaviors of managers are crucial to establish a peaceful and fair work environment. Unfairness refers to the belief by an individual that he/she is treated unfairly. This perception is related to the fact that whether individuals feel equal, when they compare themselves with others (Colquit et al., 2001). In this study, no statistically significant difference was detected between justice perception of the nurses working in both hospitals. However, according to the result of structural equation, mobbing behaviors encountered by nurses adversely influenced justice perception of them (-0.34). This result is consistent with the results of other studies (Colquit, 2001; Heponiemi et al., 2007; Hutchinson et al., 2010).

Organizational culture is an important factor which influences performance of an organization. Every hospital has a unique organizational culture which is shared by its members. Whether a hospital will be successful as an organization and will provide effective service, heavily depend on the adoption of organizational culture (Casida, 2008). According to the results of this study, the nurses working in hospital A had significantly lower perception in reward and creativity factors than those working in hospital B ($p < 0.05$).

Sperry (2009) indicates organizational culture as one of the important factors which lead to mobbing behaviors, and points out that organizational culture is affected by values of the common culture and the time period in which the institution exists. Our results are parallel with this situation;

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we found that mobbing behaviors encountered by the nurses adversely influenced organizational culture (-0.50), justice perception positively influenced organizational culture (0.29), and mobbing and justice perception cumulatively explained 0.43 of organizational culture. This situation indicates that the established theoretical model is consistent with the results of other studies (Kose & Yildirim, 2013; Sperry, 2009; Hutchinson et al., 2010; Casida, 2008; Liljegren & Ekberg, 2009).

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