



Teacher's Experience with Mobbing in Baku Schools and Its Consequences

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.18415/ijmmu.v8i1.2303>

Abstract

The phenomenon of mobbing is one of the global problems of modern life which includes unethical behaviors such as harassment, isolation, humiliation, and psychological violence. Mobbing is also occurring in the teaching staff and if mentioned behaviors used continuously, mobbing has a negative impact on the physical and mental health of humans. The study aimed to determine the mobbing behaviors and the characteristics of their impact on teachers. The research sample consisted of 202 teachers working in Baku schools in Azerbaijan. In the survey, Likert scale questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. The findings suggest that it is a mobbing behavior that teachers are most exposed is the "underestimation of work". Most of the negative effects of mobbing on teachers were the work-related effects. It was determined that single teachers compared to married teachers are more exposed to mobbing. Also, was found a statistical difference between work experience and mobbing. In data analysis, a positive and significant relationship was found between mobbing and the negative effects of mobbing ($r=,444$; $p< .01$). If the level of mobbing increases, it becomes a dangerous situation. Thus, it is essential to pay attention to this actual problem and follow recommendations to fight with mobbing and prevent its consequences.

Keywords: *Mobbing; Workplace; Negative Effects; Psychological Health*

Introduction

Currently, people spend most of time at their workplaces. It is a stressful situation to meet the requirements of the work schedule, to adapt to the growing competition. Besides, this stress is increasing by people's exposure to mobbing in the workplace. Although the term mobbing is not very popular in Azerbaijan, it is unfortunately observed in the workplace. The mobbing observed every field also occurred teaching staff of schools. Since ancient times the teaching has been considered a sacred and honorable profession in Azerbaijan and it is also a responsible and hard field. Representatives of this profession are the main intellectuals of society and play an essential role in the formation of human capital. Teachers who are constantly improving themselves and enriching the next generation with new knowledge are experiencing stress and tension in the work process. Workload, the classroom environment and compliance work discipline are some of the difficult sides of this field (Civildag and Sargin, 2011). Teachers are constantly in communication with their colleagues, students, and parents during their work. Communication with people who have different personalities can sometimes lead to conflicts. Failure to

resolve these conflicts can result in a person's gradually exposure to mobbing. Thus, in recent times we see that teachers have been verbally criticized by other people on social media, and videos about them have been shared. These negative actions damage the professional activity, psychological and physical health of teachers. As a result, this problem draws attention to the urgency of mobbing in schools.

Literature Review

Mobbing has been studied by researchers from many countries, including Germany, Norway, Australia, Finland, the UK, Denmark, Netherlands, and so on. Konrad Lorenz was the first person who introduced the term mobbing to describe animal behaviors. He referred to mobbing for defining the joint attacks of small groups of animals on a big animal to defend themselves, with references to rabbits and geese at the occurrence of a fox. The use of this term defined as psychological terror in the context of organizational psychology is due to Heinz Leymann. People are exposed to different types of behaviors in the mobbing process. Social isolation, insulting remarks, ridicule, taking away responsibilities are the most common negative acts (Leyman,1996; Zapf, Knorz and Kulla, 2008). Leymann (1996) identified five categories of mobbing which is comprised of 45 behaviors. He classified these behaviors into five categories as follows: impact on self-expression, attack on the quality of one's professional and life situation, targeting social relationships, attack on people's reputation, and attack on an individual's health. D. Zapf (in press) categorizes five types of mobbing behaviors. They are work-related behaviors, social isolation, verbal threats where you are criticized, humiliated in public, physical violence or threats, personal attacks on an individual's life by ridicule, insulting remarks, gossip or the like. Zapf, Knorz, and Kulla (2008) define mobbing as targeting a person or a group for planned and systematic aggressive and hostile actions in the social competition.

Mobbing is an evolving process and has different stages. (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; Ege,2000) . In this time, the first stage is reminiscent of a conflict situation, the final stage results in a person becoming a victim of mobbing and suffering from these problematic issues. Mobber, victim, and watcher are the main actors in the mobbing process.

Much of the research has concentrated on the relationship between well-being, health, and exposure to mobbing. At this time, several psychological, physical, and also other symptoms can be observed. (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996; Davenport, Schwartz and Elliot,1999; Einarsen and Mikkelsen, 2000;). Thus, mobbing has negative effects on employees as socially, social-psychological, psychological, and psychosomatic (Leymann,1990). These consequences manifest not only on victims, but it also impacts on their social life (Ozdemir,2015). Thus, a person who is depressed and abandoned by others begin to lose self-confidence, and then his role in the family and social environment. Einarsen and Mikkelsen (2002) classified the impact of mobbing on employees' mental health in three groups. In the first group tiredness, burnout, physical pains in the body. In the second group sleep problems, depression, lack of motivation for work. In the third group aggression, emotional imbalance, social withdrawal, and cognitive problems are observed. Mobbing also caused burnout among teachers. Wagner and Dick (2001) found a relation between mobbing and burnout.

When we pay attention to the consequences of mobbing we see how dangerous this situation from the context of society and the individual. The physical and psychological health of teachers in their work is an important factor in improving education and preparing healthy personalities for the future. For this reason, the study of mobbing is an actual problem in teaching staff, which investigated in the first time in Azerbaijan.

The main purpose of this study to determine the mobbing behaviors and the characteristics of their psychological impact on teachers. The current study investigated the following research questions:

1. What kind of mobbing behaviors are teachers exposed to?
2. What are the negative effects of mobbing on teachers?
3. Is there a correlation between mobbing behaviors and the negative effects of mobbing?
4. Is there a difference in teacher's exposure to mobbing in terms of age, gender, marital status, and work experience in the current workplace?

Method

Participants

The research was carried on 202 school teachers who work in educational institutions, volunteer to respond to questions, and exposed to mobbing in Baku schools, Azerbaijan. During the statistical analysis of the research, only 176 responses were accepted, 26 responses were excluded due to incorrect answers. Of these, 138 were women and 38 were men.

Data collection instrument

A questionnaire method was selected for collecting information during the study. The original language of the instrument was Azerbaijani. The questionnaire for this study contained 54 items, four items demographic information, 26 items information about mobbing, and 28 items information about negative effects of mobbing on teachers. In questionnaires using Likert-style options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. During the establishment of the questionnaire several local and foreign literature was analyzed and items were identified (e.g. Leymann,1996; Zapf,1999; Davenport, Schwartz and Elliot,1999; Dangac,2007; Korukcu 2014, and so on.). In this study, the development of the questionnaire and analysis of results were based on the theoretical information (e.g. Babbie 2014; Turan, 2015). At the next stage, the opinion of the experts on the questionnaire was obtained and it was completed by selecting the appropriate items taking into account the cultural factors. The questionnaires were first used for testing purposes to test the clarity of the questions and to prevent problems before starting the study. In the next step, the problematic questions corrected and the questionnaires were made ready for us.

The questionnaire of mobbing consist of six sub-dimensions are following as: underestimation of one's work, attack on self-expression, attack on people's reputation, attack on the quality of one's work, attack on one's social relations and attack on individual's physical and mental health.

The next questionnaire to study the negative effects of mobbing consists of four sub-dimensions are following as: psychological effects, psychosomatic effects, social effects, and work-related effects.

The content and face validity of the questionnaire were established with specialists in this field in Baku. The reliability of questionnaires was tested using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program after a pilot test. The reliability test indicated Cronbach's alpha value of the mobbing questionnaire was 0.85 and the alpha value of the effects of mobbing questionnaire was 0.88. According to the results alpha value greater than 0.70, therefore the instrument was found to be reliable to be used for the study.

Data collection procedures

The data collection procedure took place among school teachers in Baku. Participants selection was limited only ten school. The main data collection was conducted from 18 April to 15 May 2020.

Firstly posted a hyperlink to the online questionnaire (created with *Google Form*) with consent invitation message in groups of teachers, inviting all to voluntarily participate in the study. During the study, participants were given detailed information about the purpose of the study and noted that following ethical rules they have the opportunity to refuse to participate in any stage of the study. Besides, it was stated that the research was completely anonymous and the information obtained would be used for the aim of the research.

On the end of the data collection, downloaded the responses given by participants to the questionnaire and imported these into SPSS for analyses.

Data processing and analysis

SPSS 20.0 package program was used for statistical data analysis. The analysis of the research data was performed using a normality test and verifying the non-distribution normal of the data. For this reason, the use of a non-parametric approach was used during the analysis by Spearman correlation, Mann Whitney U test, and Kruskal Wallis H test was used to determine statistical significance. Also, descriptive statistics were used in data analysis.

Results

Demographic characteristics are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents gender, marital status, age range and work experiences in the current workplace

		Number	Percent
Gender	Male	38	21,6
	Female	138	78,4
Marital status	Single	76	43,2
	Married	100	56,8
Age range (years)	21-30	72	40,9
	31-40	60	34,1
	41-50	36	20,5
	51-60	8	4,5
Length of service in the current workplace	Below 1	28	15,9
	1-5	65	36,9
	6-10	26	14,8
	Above 11	57	32,4

Table 1 shows the descriptive characteristics of the teachers. Of the teachers, 78.4 % were female, 56.8% were married, 40.9% were in the age group of 21-30 years, and 36.9% had worked for 1 to 5 years.

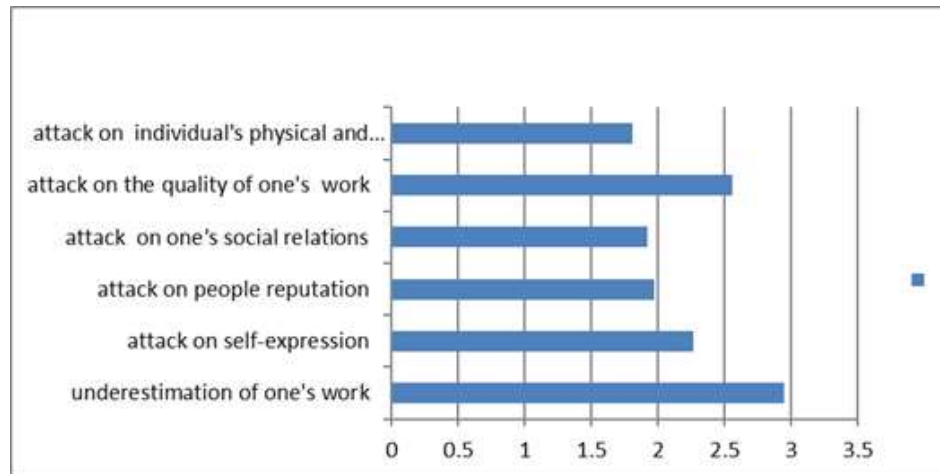


Figure 1: The indicators for sub-dimension of mobbing

According to descriptive statistics of sub-dimension (Figure 1), the mobbing behaviors in which teachers are most exposed is the underestimation of work (2,95), less exposed is the attack on individual's physical and psychological health (1,81). The next indicators are attack on quality of one's work (2,57), attack on one's social relations (1,93), attack on people reputation (1,98), attack on self-expression (2,27).

Also, the most frequent mobbing behaviors were determined:

My work is underestimated by others;

Negative things are said about me;

I do things that below my abilities;

Being interfered with my work;

My failures are more exaggerated than what I have done;

I do useless things that are no match for my professional competences.

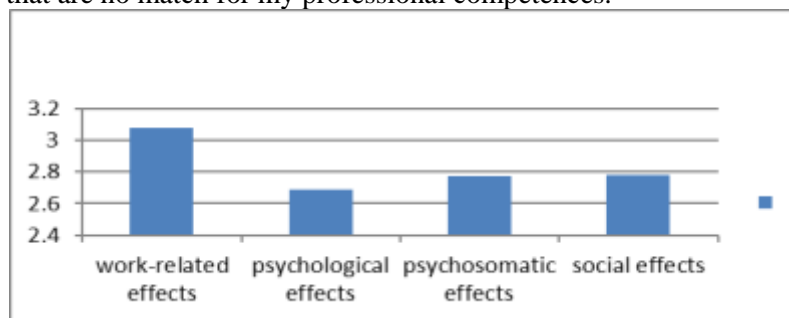


Figure 2: The indicators for sub-dimension of the negative effects of mobbing

Figure 2 shows the indicators of sub-dimension, most of the negative effects of mobbing on teachers were the work-related effects (3,08). The next indicators are psychosomatic effects (2,78), social effects (2,77) and psychological effects (2,68).

On another hand, according to descriptive statistics the most common effects of mobbing behaviors on teachers are as follows: stress, nervousness, anxiety, headache, sleep problems, increase or decrease in appetite and lack of concentration. For example, when I exposed to mobbing: "I feel stressed and nervousness", "I am suffering from sleep problems", "There is an increase or decrease in my appetite",

" I can not focus on my work ", "I am thinking about changing my job", "I do not want to go to work in the morning".

Table 2. Correlation analysis for the relationship between the teacher's level of exposure to mobbing and its negative effects on teachers

Mobbing	Spearman correlation	1	,444**
	Sig.	.000	
	N	176	176
Effects of mobbing	Spearman correlation	,444**	1
	Sig.	.000	
	N	176	176

Table 2 shows, there is a positive, significant relationship between the level of exposure mobbing and its negative effects ($r=.444$; $p<.01$).

Table 3. Correlation analysis for the relationship between sub-dimensions of mobbing and sub-dimensions of negative effects of mobbing on teachers

Spearman correlation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Underestimation of one's work		,405**	,291**	,433**	,341**	,231**	,330**	,263**	,247**	,276**
		,000	,000	,000	,000	,002	,000	,000	,001	,001
2. Attack on self-expression		2	,522**	,490**	,497**	,455**	,371**	,158**	,076**	,204**
			,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,036	,313	,007
3. Attack on people reputation			3	,510**	,491**	,313**	,277**	,123	,100	,165*
				,000	,000	,000	,000	,103	,187	0,29
4. Attack on the quality of one's work				4	,502**	,393**	,416**	,285**	,131	,321**
					,000	,000	,000	,000	,084	,000
5. Attack on one's social relations					5	,532**	,379**	,215**	,171*	,362**
						,000	,000	,004	0,23	,000
6. Attack on individual's physical and mental health						6	,346**	,161*	,190**	,381**
							,000	,033	,012	,000
7. Work-related effects							7	,328**	,320**	,462**
								,000	,000	,000
8. Social effects								8	,484**	,563**
									,000	,000
9. Psychosomatic effects									9	,506**
										,000
10. Psychological effects										10

Note. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

According to Table 3 , between the dimension of mobbing "underestimation of one's work" and work-related effects ($r=.330$; $p< .01$), social effects ($r=.263$; $p< .01$), psychological effects ($r=.276$; $p< .01$) and psychosomatic effects ($r=.247$; $p< .01$) positive and significant relationship has been observed. There is a correlation between "attack on self-expression" and work related effects ($r=.371$; $p< .01$) and psychological effects ($r=.204$; $p< .01$) . Between the "attack on people reputation" and work-related effects ($r=.277$; $p< .01$) a low level, positive and significant relationship. Between the " attack on the quality of one's work" and work-related effects ($r=.416$; $p< .01$) , psychological effects ($r=.321$; $p< .01$), social effects ($r=.285$; $p< .01$) positive and significant relationship has been observed. There is positive and significant relationship between the "attack on one's social relations" and work-related ($r=.379$; $p< .01$), psychological effects ($r=.362$; $p< .01$) and social effects($r=.215$; $p<0.01$) . Between the dimension of mobbing "attack on individual's physical and mental health" and work-related effects ($r=.346$; $p< .01$), psychological effects ($r=.381$; $p< .01$), and social effects ($r=.161$; $p< .05$) positive and significant correlation has been observed.

Table 4. U-test result of mobbing in term of gender and marital status

		N	Mean rank	Rank sum	U	P
Gender	Male	38	96,03	3649,0	2336,0	,304
	Female	138	86,43	11927,0		
Marital status	Single	76	97,95	7444,50	3081,5	,032
	Married	100	81,32	8131,50		

Table 4 indicates whether the teachers' levels of exposure to mobbing differed according to their marital status, and a significant difference was found ($U= 3081,5$; $p<.05$). Considering the average row, single teachers compared to married teachers are more vulnerable to the actions of mobbing.

Table 5. U-test results of the negative effects of mobbing in terms of gender and marital status

		N	Mean rank	Rank sum	U	P
Gender	Male	38	90,34	3433,0	2552,0	,801
	Female	138	87,99	12143,0		
Marital status	Single	76	88,59	6732,5	3793,5	,985
	Married	100	88,44	8843,5		

When Table 5 examined, the negative effects of mobbing did not vary significantly in terms of gender ($U= 2552,0$; $p> .05$) and in terms of marital status ($U= 3793,5$; $p> .05$).

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis H -test results of mobbing in terms of age and length of service in the current workplace

		N	Rank mean	sd	X^2	P
Age	21-30	72	96,70	3	6,718	,081
	31-40	60	90,11			
	41-50	36	75,82			
	51-60	8	59,69			
Work experience in the current workplace	Below 1	28	97,91	3	15,606	,001
	1-5	65	104,48			
	6-10	26	77,92			
	Above 11	57	70,48			

As indicated in Table 6, exposure to mobbing show significant differences by work experience in the current workplace [$\chi^2(df = 3, n=176) = 6,718, p < .05$]. Findings indicate the effect of length of service variable on mobbing. Considering the group's row average, teachers in the work experience group 1 to 5 years and below 1 year compared to other groups are more exposure to mobbing.

Table 7. Kruskal Wallis H -test results of the negative effects of mobbing in terms of age and length of service in the current workplace

		N	Rank mean	Sd	χ^2	P
Age	21-30	72	85,69	3	,832	,842
	31-40	60	93,04			
	41-50	36	88,00			
	51-60	8	81,94			
Work experience in the current workplace	Below 1	28	78,18	3	15,606	,096
	1-5	65	92,38			
	6-10	26	71,25			
	Above 11	57	97,01			

According to Table 7, negative effects of mobbing did not significant differences by age [$\chi^2(df = 3, n=176) = 0,832, p > .05$] and work experience [$\chi^2(df = 3, n=176) = 15,606, p > .05$].

Discussion and conclusions

Mobbing, which impacts on people's health, their social life, and quality of work is also observed in the teaching staff with its consequences. Some people accept this situation as mobbing and try to fight this problem, but the other group unaware that they are exposed to mobbing and as a result, they are "reconcile with their fate" in order not to lose their jobs.

Research shows that the most mobbing behaviors which teachers exposure in the schools are "underestimation of their work". Ertas and Kirac (2017) found that one of the most common mobbing behaviors is "interference in their work". In another study determined that mobbing behaviors are "limiting opportunities to demonstrate abilities" and "restrict communication" in school. The effects of mobbing behaviors on teachers are different. These behaviors not only impact their work, but there are also have psychological, psychosomatic, and social effects on teachers (Leymann, 1990). Thus, mobbing cause that teachers do not focus on their work, thinking about changing work, and do not want to work. After exposure to mobbing, most teachers feel stressed, nervous, and tired. Teachers experience health issues which are included in psychosomatic symptoms, such as headaches, sleep disorders, increase or decrease in appetites. According to the results found a positive correlation between mobbing and their negative effects. A study by Dangac (2007) also shows that mobbing and its negative effects have had a positive significant relationship. The increased mobbing level in schools leads to increase consequences of mobbing on teachers. Many studies have identified the consequences of mobbing on teachers such as physical symptoms, anxiety, burnout, nervousness, and other stress-related problems (Celebi and Kaya, 2014; Dick and Wager, 2001). Study finding suggests that there are mobbing did not vary significantly in terms of gender and age. According to a study by Koc and Bulut (2009), there is mobbing not significantly differed in terms of age. In several studies conducted among teachers found that mobbing did not differ according to their gender. (e.g. Civildag and Sargin, 2011; Ates, 2019). Single teachers compared to married teachers were more exposed to mobbing in school. Bucuklar (2009) also found a similar result, single teachers vulnerable to mobbing compared to married teachers. This is because single people have more time and for this reason more involved in work. Exposure to mobbing shows significant

differences through work experience in the current workplace. This finding determined that teachers with fewer experiences in the workplace are more likely to be victimized. Ajar's (2013) study shows that mobbing victims were exposed to mobbing behavior early in their worklives. This result suggests that new employees do not adapt to staff and they have not experienced about work environment as old employees.

Finally, according to the results of the study the teacher's experience with mobbing in schools causes them to suffer from various negative effects. In this case, the consequences of mobbing are considered a factor that impacts their quality of life. When the consequences of mobbing continue for a long time, it also becomes a problematic issue including teachers for our society, families, students, and educational institutions. Thus, emphasizes the importance of fight with mobbing.

Recommendations

For preventing mobbing in the workplace, the following recommendations should be put into practice:

People should be informed about their rights and responsibilities;

Extensive educational and informational activities should be taken in the workplaces about mobbing;

The work of employees should be evaluated objectively and their success should not be ignored;

Employees should be involved in stress management training;

The role of school psychologists in the educational sector should be expanded;

Issues that reduce the quality of work and motivation of employees have to identify and eliminate.

As a result, it is necessary to protect the physical and mental health of teachers, eliminate the complications, and take further measures in this direction.

Acknowledgment

The author would like to acknowledge to all teachers who volunteered to participate in this research and responded questionnaires.

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