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Primary education teachers' problem: mobbing (Kastamonu province sample)

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Abstract

In this study, the professional terrorization imposed upon the teachers working at primary schools by the school managers has been studied in terms of the variables of gender and seniority. The research is a descriptive survey model study. The sampling of study is constituted by 268 primary school teachers working in the Central District of Kastamonu. As the data collection tool, the Negative Acts Questionnaire has been used in the study, which was developed by Einarsen and Raknes (1997) and translated into Turkish by Cemaloğlu (2007) and tested for validity and reliability. Among the findings of the study, it has been seen that the primary school teachers, in general, are not exposed to terrorization behaviors. It has been found that there is not any significant relationship between the studied variables of gender and seniority and the exposure to terrorization.

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1. Introduction

It is seen that such concepts as organizational culture and organizational climate have begun to take place in the working life in recent years. If the organizational climate and organizational culture are properly established, this will ensure that the employer and the employees work in harmony and the work quality is increased (Yaman, 2010). The terrorization approaches are considered to negatively affect the organizational climate and organizational culture, and therefore, it is seen as an important issue required to be put emphasis on.

The term “mobbing”, in literature, is referred to as conspiracy, bullying, psychological terrorism, and psychological harassment. In this study, it has been chosen to be referred to as terrorization. The concept had been first defined by the German industrial psychologist, Heinz Leyman, who lives in Sweden, at the end of 1980's. Terrorization is a kind of psychological terrorism iterated by other employees or employers at work and applied as verbal attacks but not based on physical attacks (Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Tinaz, 2008; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002).

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It is possible to say that, among the reasons for terrorization, the effective factors are the organizational causes, those who perform intimidating actions towards the personnel, social groups, being considered as the reason for every trouble and the factors arising from the personnel (Cemaloğlu, 2007).

When the studies carried out on the terrorization are reviewed, it shows that terrorization poses a threat for the self-respect, personality or professional competence of those who are exposed to terrorization, while it has a negative impact on both verbal and non-verbal communication (Agervold & Mikkelsen, 2004; Vartia, 2001; Tracy, Lutgen-Sandvik & Alberts, 2006; Yaman, 2010).

Although there are disagreements about how terrorization is studied and measured in the best way, terrorization has two sub-dimensions. These are *task* (the teachers' being deprived of the information to act upon their achievements, humiliated by being assigned to the tasks under their competence level, exclusion and being disregarded) and *social relationships* (offensive words about the personality, attitude and personal life) (Helge, Brian, Cary & Cooper, 2004; Kılınç, 2010). It is seen that bullying at school poses a serious problem. Both the students and the personnel seek a variety of ways to cope with the situation they are in (Ivarson, Broberg, Arvidsson & Gillberg, 2005).

In this study, it is aimed at studying the professional terrorization imposed by the school managers upon the teachers working in the primary schools as well as the variables of gender and seniority. It is valuable and important, as it is considered that terrorization at schools is a significant problem and studying it in terms of different variables will contribute to the literature.

2. Method

This part of the research includes method, sampling, assessment instrument and analysis of data.

2.1. Method and Sample

This study is a survey-model descriptive study. The descriptive studies are those which attempt to describe a case properly and attentively as much as possible (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). In this study, it is also tried to describe the terrorization behaviors imposed upon the teachers properly and attentively by means of the data collection tool used. In accordance with the purpose of the study, the universe of this study is constituted by total 546 teachers in 21 primary schools within the borders of the municipality according to Kastamonu Directorate of National Education bound to central district of Kastamonu. The sampling of the study consists of 304 teachers working in 12 primary schools chosen by means of simple, random sampling method. This figure is deemed to be ± 0.05 based on the number of universes and satisfactory based on the sampling error (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). Of the applied questionnaire forms, 36 forms which are not filled in according to the instructions have been removed from the scope of the assessment and it has been applied to 268 teachers in total working in primary schools. It is possible to say that this achieved figure is appropriate for the representation of the universe.

2.2. Data Collection Tool

In the study, exposure to the terrorization behaviors have been measured using the Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ) with the questions related to negative acts. This questionnaire consists of 21 items measuring the exposure to a variety of negative acts (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87). All the questions in the questionnaire form are related to the behaviors and the term terrorization is not indicated anywhere in the questionnaire. Thus, it enables the teacher who has filled in the form to achieve a neutral judgment in his description of the behavior. For the use of the questionnaire, the necessary permissions have been granted by the specialist (Cemaloğlu, 2007) who translated and adapted the questionnaire into Turkish. And the permissions required to apply the questionnaire have been granted by Kastamonu Directorate of National Education.

With NAQ, the questions are denoted, which are included in the direct (verbal harassment, offensive wordings and mocking, etc.) or indirect (social exclusion, slander, etc.) items. For each item of the NAQ, the respondents were asked how frequent they have been exposed to in the last six months. This frequency was categorized as to be

divided into never, occasionally, every month, every week and every day. Those who have been exposed to such negative acts every week for more than 6 months were considered to be suitable for the definition of workplace terrorization victim (Leymann, Mikkelsen & Einarsen cited in Cemaloğlu, 2007, pp. 80).

3. Findings

The frequencies of exposure to terrorization (mobbing) of the teachers involved in the sampling are given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Exposed Terrorization Frequencies

Item	df	\bar{x}	Item	df	\bar{x}	Item	df	\bar{x}
1	.94	1.27	8	1.00	1.59	15	.96	1.30
2	.98	1.41	9	1.06	1.69	16	.92	1.39
3	.98	1.50	10	1.05	1.96	17	1.01	1.46
4	1.01	1.45	11	1.02	1.55	18	1.02	1.36
5	.94	1.24	12	1.04	1.79	19	.98	1.49
6	1.06	1.81	13	1.02	1.66	20	1.00	1.57
7	1.04	1.85	14	.98	1.36	21	.94	1.23

When the distribution in the Table 1 related to the opinions of the teachers in central primary schools in Kastamonu regarding the frequencies of exposure to terrorization, the teachers expressed their opinions about that they are Occasionally exposed to the terrorization cases such as "hiding the information that may act upon success", "being humiliated by being assigned to the tasks under the competence level", "cancellation of the responsibilities in important fields", "spread of gossips and rumors about themselves", "becoming the target of sudden anger", "continuously reminding errors", "disregarding the ideas and opinions", "exposure to unpleasant jokes", "asking for illogical works and works impossible to be completed in time", "exposure to accusation and impeachments", "exposure to heavy workload", etc. In addition, it has been revealed that the teachers are exposed to such attitudes as "being disregarded, excluded", "offensive words about personality, attitude and personal life", "being fingered at, attack on the personal area", "pressures made them to quit the job", "disregarding the opinions and suggestions" and "exposure to endless critics about your work", etc. once a month. When these findings from the questionnaire are considered, it is seen that the teachers are confronted by approaches of terrorization for many different reasons.

While 190 (70.9%) of the teachers involved in the research replied "yes" to the question "Have you ever been exposed to bullying at work?" which is the last item of the questionnaire, the remaining 78 (29.1%) teachers indicated that they had not been exposed to any bullying act at work.

To examine the relationship between the genders of the teachers and their opinions on exposure to terrorization, an Independent samples T-test was carried out. The coefficient of skewness required to make this statistical procedure was calculated and found to be .65. If the coefficient of skewness stays within the limits of ± 1 , it can be interpreted that the scores do not show any significant deviation from the normal distribution (Büyüköztürk et al., 2011). The result of the Independent samples T-test procedure is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. The relation between the gender and opinions about exposure to terrorization

Gender	N	\bar{x}	S	df	t	p
Female	183	31.26	14.75	266	.702	.484*
Male	85	29.95	13.08			

*p \geq .05

When the Table 2 was viewed, it is found that there is not any significant difference between the genders of the teachers and the frequency of their exposure to terrorization ($(266)=.702, p \geq .05$). In other words, it has been seen that the genders of teachers do not have any impact on their opinions about being exposed to the terrorization. When the findings on the Tables 1 and 2 are put together, it is seen that the teachers are confronted by the terrorization approaches regardless of their genders.

With respect to the variable of professional seniority which is another variable of the study, the results of the ANOVA test carried out to examine the relation between the professional seniority of the respondent teachers and their opinions about the frequency of being exposed to terrorization.

Table 3. The relation between the professional seniority and opinions on being exposed to terrorization

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean of Squares</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Inter- groups</i>	1930.754	5	386.151		
<i>Intra-groups</i>	52188.532	262	199.193	1.939	.088*
<i>Total</i>	54119.286	267			

* $p \geq .05$

The results of analysis shows that there is not any significant difference between the professional seniority and the opinions about their frequency of being exposed to the terrorization behaviors of the teachers working in the primary school in the central district in Kastamonu ($F(5, 262)=1.94, p \geq .05$).

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

4.1. Conclusions

With this study, it has been found that the teachers working in the primary schools in the central district in Kastamonu are exposed to the manners, behaviors and attitudes of terrorization in their professional lives occasionally or once a month.

In the light of the findings, 190 (70.9%) of the teachers involved in the study have stated that they are exposed to bullying at works. This ratio is thought-provoking because bullying is a negative act displayed in a longer term than the behaviors of terrorization. Accordingly, it has been concluded that 70.9% of the teachers are confronted by long-term negative acts.

In the research, it has been found that there is not any significant relationship among their opinions about the frequency of being exposed to the terrorization behavior according to the variable of gender. This finding is in accordance with the conclusion of the research conducted by Bulut (2007) but not in accordance with the finding of Cemaloğlu and Ertürk (2007) and the finding of Kılıç (2009). Looking at these researches, it is stated that the women encounter the terrorization behaviors much more. It can be said that the behaviors of being exposed to terrorization shows no difference in terms of gender because of the socio-cultural nature of the teachers and the region involved in the sampling. It can be said that these differences can be eliminated by a much higher number of women involved in the sampling than the number of men and women's and men's working together.

It has been found in the study that there is not any significant difference between the professional seniority variable and exposure to terrorization. These results are similar to those results of the study conducted by Bulut (2007). It can be said that there is not any differences according to the professional seniority is because the employees are each a member of the same organization climate and organizational culture. This is because the new members of the work environment are considered to be a part of that organization and the emphasis on seniority disappears.

4.2. Suggestions

As a result of this study, it has been seen that the teachers are exposed to terrorization acts throughout their professional lives. Acting from this, there should be conducted studies about what kind of measures have to be taken for the teachers not to encounter these behaviors because these behaviors may negatively affect the organizational climate and organization culture and this, accordingly, may act upon the education and teaching processes.

In the other studies to be conducted in the future, there can be conducted researches related to from whom the terrorization behaviors come or how those people who are exposed to these behaviors feel or their methods of coping with these behaviors. This is because; it will contribute to reveal the problem more clearly and thus, to create solutions to reveal those who make the terrorization acts.

It is recommended to hold informative conferences and panels related to mobbing for the school managers and teachers and to create awareness for this issue because the managers and the teachers may not adequately know which behaviors are the terrorization behaviors. Therefore, they may exhibit such behaviors as remaining silent in case of such behaviors and acceptance, etc. It has been recommended as an important solution for the employees to protect themselves when they become exposed to terrorization to teach and inform (Sheehan, 1998) those employees regarding the terrorization in their own working environment.

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