The Mediating Effect of Silence within the Organization in Relationship between Perceived Mobbing and Emotional Burnout

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

In today's society, the work life represents an important domain in the lives of individuals. Positive or negative experiences in the workplace can affect the individual's health status. Mobbing is one of the negative experiences that people can experience at work, and it is noteworthy that in recent years mobbing has been an increasing problem on a global scale. This prompts researchers from different scientific backgrounds (such as psychology, sociology or organizational behavior) to study and examine the antecedents and outcomes of mobbing. The previous studies revealed that individual, organizational and social factors play important roles on individuals' mobbing experiences. While personality characteristics of mobbing victims and practitioners refer the individual factors, competition among employees, the ineffectiveness of managers in solving employees' problems and inappropriate complaints mechanisms present organizational factors (Davenport, Schwartz ve Elliott, 2003). The societal habits on searching and finding the criminals can be considered as social factors (Tınaz, 2006).

When we look at the outcomes of the mobbing experiences, there are individual and organizational consequences. Since the victims of mobbing feel themselves in continuous psychological danger, they will spend their times and efforts in protecting themselves from others, which in turn decrease their performance, job involvement, and organizational commitment and affect the psychological well-being of them negatively (Altuntaş, 2010; Taş and Korkmaz, 2014; Qureshi et al., 2015).

Burnout is an important issue that results in serious problems related to work and personal lives. The studies indicate that job dissatisfaction, intention to leave and high turnover rates can be seen on individuals who felt burnout (Izgar, 2001; Basım ve Şeşen, 2006). Although burnout is generally related to work lives, there are also individual factors that affect perceived burnout (Caputo, 1991; Dağlı and Gündüz,

2008). Many studies indicated that introversive, sensitive, agreeable and conscientious people feel more burnout compared to others (Carrasco-Ortiz, 2005; Mills and Huebner, 1998; Sağlam Arı and Bal, 2008). Another effective variable on burnout is mobbing. Several studies on different samples demonstrated that the mobbing perception of individuals positively affects the burnout level of employees (Merecz, Drabek, and Moscicka, 2009; Dikmetaş, Top and Ergin, 2011; Gül, İnce and Özcan, 2011). Although the fostering impact of mobbing on burnout is investigated in previous studies, the other variables (as mediators or moderators) that can have a role in this relationship are ignored. In the lights of the literatüre review and previous empirical studies, this paper aims to examine the mediator role of silence within organizations between mobbing and burnout.

Methodology

Sample and Measurement

The sample of this study consists of 157 academic and administrative employees in universities. The 67 % of participants have 2 or 5 years work experiences, and approximately 45 % of them have Ph.D. degree. The questionnaire consists of three parts related to our variables. The first part consists Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror items, which was adapted to Turkish by Özcan (2011). Since the aim of this paper is to investigate psychological aspects of violence the factor and its 4 items related to physical violence are not included in our questionnaire. Therefore the first part of the questionnaire consists 33 items and 4 factors which are 'the behaviors that aim to obstruct the self-realization and communication,' behaviors that aim to obstruct social relationship,' 'behaviors harming one's esteem' and 'behaviors towards the person's profession and life quality.'

The second part of the survey consists of Çakıcı's (2008) organizational silence scale. The scale composes 30 items and 5 factors which are 'managerial and organizational reasons' 'job-related reasons,' 'lack of work experience,' 'fear of isolation,' and 'fear of damaging relationships.' In the third part, Maslach and Jackson's (1981) 'Burnout Inventory', which was adapted to Turkish by Ergin (1992), was used. The inventory consists 3 factors as 'emotional exhaustion,' 'depersonalization' and 'personal accomplishment.' Although the burnout scale have three subscales, many researchers have indicated that the emotional exhaustion is a central factor and best reveals the "core meaning" of burnout (Cordes and Dougherty, 1993; Gaines and Jermier, 1983; Wright and Cropanzano, 1998). Also, it is considered that the other variables in our model will mainly have psychological effects and emotional feelings of exhaustion on individuals. In that manner, only the emotional exhaustion subscales of burnout were included in the survey. It consists 9 items. For all items, participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree, 5: strongly agree).

Results and Discussion

The research model was analyzed with structural equation modeling. The structural equation models reveal the factor and regression analysis together. To explain the results clearly, first, the findings related to factor analysis were presented. The obtained findings indicated that the factorial structure of our model represents consistency with previous researches' findings. Moreover, the factor loadings of all observed items were found above the 0,4 within the factors they were associated

theoretically. The suggested modifications (correlations between error terms of conceptually related items) were checked and implied. In the end, the redundancy problems resolved and the fit of the model to the data set was increased. The Cronbach alpha coefficients and component reliabilities of variables were also good or satisfactory, ranged from .77 to .91.

The proposed relations of all variables were found significantly positive. When the mediator variable, organizational silence, was excluded from the model, the relationships between mobbing and emotional exhaustion was found significantly positive (β=0, 61, p<0, 05). When the mediator variable was included, the relationship between mobbing and organizational silence (β=0, 81, p<0, 05) and mobbing and emotional exhaustion (β=0, 53, p<0, 05) were found significantly positive. The relationship between organizational silence and emotional exhaustion (β=0, 45, p<0,05) was also found significant and positive. The comparison of model fit indices with and without mediator variable indicated the better fit of the model with mediator variable. Lastly, as Preacher and Hayes (2008) suggested, the bootstrap sampling technique was applied to confirm the mediating role of organizational silence. The obtained findings confirmed the model with mediator (lower limit (90%) = 0.08, upper limit (90%) = 2.05, p <0.00).

These findings indicate that individuals who perceive mobbing at work and who are also silent about organizational change and development have been found to have higher levels of frustration and fatigue. In addition to all of these, these findings can also be interpreted as that those who perceive mobbing can prefer to remain silent in situations of mobbing applied to other people, and as a result, they may feel emotional exhaustion. Observers, one of the components of the mobbing process, are people who are not directly involved in the mobbing process but are indifferent to these behaviors. Indeed, in both cases, it is clear that the perception of mobbing increases the level of emotional exhaustion of individuals through organizational silence. Therefore, while the relationship between mobbing and burnout is examined, it would be more comprehensive approach when the individuals' level of organizational silence towards organizational events is considered.