
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN WORKPLACE MOBBING BEHAVIORS AND REVENGE THOUGHTS: EMPIRICAL RESULTS FROM HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Suleyman Murat Yildiz

smyildiz@gmail.com
Mugla Sitki Kocman University,
Faculty of Sport Sciences, Turkey.

Sevim Gullu

sevim.gullu@istanbul.edu.tr
Mugla Sitki Kocman University,
Faculty of Sport Sciences, Turkey.

ABSTRACT

Research on the relationship between workplace mobbing and revenge thoughts in the literature is very limited. Therefore, this study aims to examine and better understand the relationships between these two variables. The sample for the study was collected from academicians who worked in higher education institutions. Correlation and hierarchical regression analysis were used to explore the relationships between variables in the study, and the results show statistically significant and positive relationships between mobbing and revenge thoughts. Moreover, it is noteworthy that mobbing has a high level of influence on revenge thoughts. Managerial and research implications and contributions of the study are discussed.

Keywords: Workplace Mobbing; Revenge Thoughts; Academician; Higher Education Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, there has been a growing scholarly interest in workplace mobbing and revenge thoughts. The reason for this interest is that mobbing and revenge are behaviors that negatively affect employees and organizations. In the literature, many studies try to describe workplace mobbing with the negative behavior of bullies in different organizations (Zapf, 1999). In subsequent studies focusing on the consequences of mobbing, the relationships between mobbing and other variables were discussed (Vveinhardt, Fominiene, and Andriukaitiene, 2019).

Mobbing, which has complex and heterogeneous characteristics, is a unique phenomenon. This phenomenon is a specific form of psychological violence in the workplace intended to attack an employee's integrity over time, aiming to have them leave an organization (Leymann, 1996). The International Labour Organization (ILO) reported an increasing trend of negative psychological work environments related to mobbing that played an important role in workplace violence. According to statistics, hundreds of millions of employees are affected negatively by this phenomenon every year (Volk, Dane, and Marini, 2014). For instance, in the United States, 38% of health employees reported psychological harassment (Dunn, 2003). Especially in European countries, mobbing at the workplace is a very widespread phenomenon. In the Fifth European Working Conditions Survey 2010 by the European Foundation, in the EU-27 Member States, on average, 4.1% of employees stated exposure to mobbing at the workplace. Academic studies in Scandinavian and European countries have shown that mobbing is a phenomenon that can be seen in working environments regardless of gender and culture (Leymann and Gustafsson, 1996). Employees who have been directly exposed to mobbing behaviors report a negative effect on their physical, psychological, and emotional health, social relationships, and well-being (Niedl, 1996).

Despite over two decades of studies on mobbing in various working environments, higher educational institutions (HEIs) are a setting where very little research has been conducted to date (King and Piotrowski, 2015). Mobbing behaviors experienced by academicians have recently appeared in the literature (Ozturk et al., 2008). In effect, the top-down organizational structure of HEIs allows the emergence of mobbing. HEIs are prestigious workplaces that have a reward in terms of academic titles, administrative positions, etc., for academicians. In HEIs, academicians conduct educational activities, scientific research, and publishing activities to meet their own need for achievement. In return for their performance, they demand a top title. In addition, they can demand an administrative position to meet their power needs (Yildiz, 2020). Therefore, it can be said that limited titles and positions in HEIs are important factors that crea-

te competition for academicians. Procedural means to gain superiority among academicians is acceptable, but one's behavior that harms the other is unacceptable. In this context, mobbing has made a reputation as a way of harming one another.

Undoubtedly, mobbing is the antecedent of many negative consequences. The impact of mobbing in HEIs can have corrosive repercussions both for academicians (i.e., demoralization, low performance) and on the institutional climate (i.e., employee turnover, low productivity) (Raskauskas and Skrabec, 2011). At the same time, mobbing leads to many problems that may disturb the working peace and relationships. At this point, examples include the breakdown of social relations among employees and the formation of revenge in victims. Revenge is part of the social fabric of organizational life (Tripp and Bies, 2010) and is a sense of deprivation arising from the perception of injustice (Bies and Tripp, 2001). Although there are many studies on revenge in the literature, studies dealing with the relationship between mobbing and revenge are very limited (Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2009). To the best of our knowledge, there is no research dealing with the relationship between the two variables on academicians in the environment of HEIs. Therefore, this study aims to explore the relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts in the context of academicians in HEI. Accordingly, this paper is organized into three parts. First, the literature review and methodology are provided. Then, the study findings are presented. And finally, the contributions of this study are developed.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Mobbing

The term "mobbing" was introduced by Konrad Lorenz (1963), an Austrian ethologist. He originally used the term of "mobbing behavior" to describe intimidating animal behavior in which a group of small animals targeted a single animal in various ways. Later, Heinemann (1972) applied this term to investigate children's group behavior associated with harming a group member by other group members. Although mobbing has existed for a long time, its effects in the workplace have only been scientifically examined over the last two decades.

Leymann (1996) can be considered a leading researcher examining the psychological effects of workplace mobbing on employees. Leymann's research has focused on the characteristics of mobbing behaviors and their effects on individuals exposed to these behaviors. He defined mobbing in the workplace as "[...] a social interaction through which one individual (seldom more) is attacked by one or more (seldom

more than four) individuals almost on a daily basis and for many months, bringing the person into an almost helpless position with a potentially high risk of expulsion" (p. 168). Leymann (1996) conducted a series of investigations into mobbing and classified 45 behaviors into five different categories: self-expression and communication (i.e., silencing the victims; threatening the victims verbally; constantly criticizing the victim's work performance); social relationships (i.e., banning the victim from speaking to colleagues; staying away from the victim); attacks on reputation (i.e., gossiping about the victim, ridiculing the victim's private life); attacks on quality of work life (i.e., giving the victim meaningless work tasks; giving the victim tasks well below their qualifications); and attacks on health (i.e., giving the victim dangerous work tasks, threatening, attacking).

Basically, Leymann's classification describes the conceptualization of mobbing as a process, not just an event, and the work environment conditions in which the victim experiences the injury. Any of the above behaviors may arise under certain conditions as a one-off and/or limited activity. When a negative behavior occurs once, it would not be right to call it mobbing (Yildiz, 2020). The researchers agree that for the diagnosis of mobbing, behaviors need to be long-term and have frequent repetition (Einarsen et al., 2003; Notelaers et al., 2006).

The fact that mobbing, which creates serious problems in the workplace, is widespread in every sector has pushed researchers to develop scales. Mobbing scales play an important role in determining negative behaviors toward the victim. Therefore, a number of researchers developed the mobbing scales to measure the negative attitude and behavior of bullies. For instance, there is a 45-item Leymann Inventory of Psychological Terror (Leymann, 1996), a 22-item Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (Einarsen, Hoel, and Notelaers, 2009), a 4-item Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised-United States (Simons, Stark, and De Marco, 2011), and a 5-item The Luxembourg Workplace Mobbing Scale (Steffgen et al., 2016). These scales have been commonly used to measure mobbing exposure levels. The samples included in these scales consist of different occupational groups in different sectors. Recently, Yildiz (2020) developed a scale for academicians in HEIs called the Mobbing Scale for Academicians (MS-A). Distinct from other scales mentioned previously, MS-A proposes an economic and short-version measurement instrument with the strong psychometric aspect of mobbing specifically designed for HEIs. This scale has ten items and consists of two sub-dimensions named vertical/horizontal mobbing and vertical mobbing. Vertical or horizontal mobbing refers to an employee's exposure to mobbing behavior by their manager or colleagues of the same status. Vertical mobbing, on the other hand, refers to an employee's exposure to mobbing behaviors only by their manager.

Revenge thoughts

A person exposing wrongdoing or unfair treatment may also develop a feeling of reaction (Venkataramani and Dalal, 2007), similar to the feeling of doing good to someone who is practicing good behavior (Gouldner, 1960). In an organization, if a person violates the rights of another person, contradicting written or unwritten norms, this is considered to be damaging behavior (Thau et al., 2007). The emotional response of the person who is harmed by the damaging behavior is explained by the concept of revenge thoughts (Kim et al., 1998). Revenge is considered a basic human impulse and a strong motivator of social behavior (Marongui and Newman, 1987). The sense of restoring justice against the perception of injustice is the main reason underlying the act of revenge (Kim and Smith, 1993).

Stuckless and Goranson (1992) defined revenge as the punishment imposed in response to perceived inaccuracy. Skarlicki and Folger (1997) evaluated revenge as a response to perceived inequality. The relative deprivation theory can explain negative feelings towards unfair situations in employees. According to the relative deprivation theory, when a person perceives a contradiction between what he thinks he deserves and the actual results, a feeling of deprivation occurs in him, creating feelings of frustration, dissatisfaction, anger, and revenge (Bernstein and Crosby, 1980). The victim's perception of injustice arises from the assessment of the damage to which he or she is exposed. If the perception of harm is great, the degree of revenge increases (Kim and Smith, 1993).

Tripp, Bies, and Aquino (2007) mention a number of revenge triggers. One of them is goal obstruction. When the achievement of the desired career goals of employees is obstructed, they will have strong revenge thoughts. Another is status and power derogation. When an employees' status is undermined, their thoughts of revenge increase. Therefore, employees who experience interpersonal mistreatment can experience an intense desire to strike back (Jones, 2010).

The process of revenge consists of two steps. When injustice is perceived, a motivation for revenge develops. This motivation then works as an act of revenge (Bordia et al., 2014). The first act of the employee may be to reduce their contribution to the organization. For instance, an employee with the idea of revenge may exhibit psychological withdrawal behavior and withdraw organizational citizenship behavior (Skarlicki, Folger, and Tesluk, 1999). Particularly if distribution justice is violated, the perceived injustice increases the employee's desire to punish the infringer (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Employees who feel unfair treatment within the organization may resort to indirect and covert forms of retaliation methods to restore justice, as they are weak against managers (Sommers, Schell, and Vodanovich, 2002). Under

unjust managerial policies and unfair behavior, subordinates may seek revenge through work sabotage (doing work incorrectly) (Ambrose, Seabright, and Schminke, 2000), theft (Greenberg, 1993), and rumor (Bordia et al., 2014).

In the context of organizational hierarchy, upward revenge (subordinates' sense of revenge against superiors) is higher than downward revenge (Kim, Smith, and Brigham, 1998). This is because retaliation develops as a negative response to perceived injustice in subordinates (Skarlicki and Folger, 1997). Considering that the sense of revenge has an annoying, motivating, and performance-degrading effect on organizations (Sener, Cetinkaya, and Akkoca, 2017), it is clear that the prevention of this emotion depends on a number of managerial efforts. The leading one is the healthy functioning of the justice mechanism in the organization. Indeed, there is evidence in the literature that justice provided by organizations reduces employees' feelings of revenge (Güllü and Sahin, 2017).

Relationships between mobbing and revenge thoughts

Employees, one of the dynamics of the organization, have a number of expectations not clearly stated. These expectations mean that one employee wants to see goodness from others or at least does not want to suffer from others. One of the greatest benefits of an employee is to support another employee when he/she has problems with the work in terms of information and psychological and social aspects. In addition, an employee's expectation is that his/her manager will contribute to his/her personal rights (i.e., salary, performance, promotion, etc.) and act fairly. In a sense, this is the beginning of social exchange.

According to Blau (1964), the first to use the term "social exchange", when individuals see the goodness of others, they find themselves obliged to return that goodness in the future. On the other hand, the person doing good does not know when and how, but he/she expects this goodness to return in the future (Wayne, Shore, and Liden, 1997, p. 82). An employee who receives positive behavior from another colleague will exhibit similar behavior as a response. The employee who receives positive behavior from the manager will provide more commitment, trust, and performance in return, and the satisfied manager will provide them with more resources and rewards.

There are also negative behaviors in the work environment that may be contrary to the above-mentioned social exchange phenomenon. Mobbing behavior is one of them. As the basis of mobbing behavior is to intentionally and deliberately harm the targeted individual, it is inevitable for the victim to develop a sense of retaliation (Foster, 2012). There is evidence in the literature that when employees are ex-

posed to unfair behavior, there is first an increase in anger and then the intention of revenge (Bies et al., 2007; Nelson, Little, and Simmons, 2007). However, it is stated that not all employees who think they have suffered injustice and victimization in organizations have turned to revenge behavior and that it is possible to forgive and show mercy to the person who harmed them (Akin, Ozdevecioglu, and Unlu, 2012; Cosgrove and Konstam, 2008). However, if the victim thinks that he or she has been deliberately victimized and suffered considerable harm, the possibility of forgiveness is low and the intention of revenge is high (Saricam and Cetinkaya, 2017). Intentional, systematic, and sustained mobbing behavior, also known as exhibiting undeserved behavior to a person, can be a significant cause of revenge formation. There are very few studies in the literature dealing with the relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts (Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2009). There is no study, especially for academicians, on the environment of HEI. To fill this gap, the following hypotheses have been developed in order to better understand the relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts in the context of academicians in HEIs:

H₁. Vertical or horizontal mobbing will have a positive effect on revenge thoughts.

H₂. Vertical mobbing will have a positive effect on revenge thoughts.

H₃. Mobbing will have a positive effect on revenge thoughts.

METHOD

Sample size and procedure

The data used in this study were collected from full-time academicians working in the faculty of sport sciences at 12 Turkish state universities. Communication with all academicians was provided via e-mail. First, the academicians were informed about the study aim, which was sent to 358 academicians to voluntarily participate in the study. Then, 214 voluntary academicians were identified (a 59.7% return rate). As a result of the examination, 18 forms were found to be lacking information, and therefore, 196 forms were found suitable for the analysis.

Measurement instruments

The Mobbing Scale for Academicians (MS-A) developed by Yildiz (2020) was used to measure mobbing behaviors in HEIs. This instrument consists of ten items and measures mobbing in two dimensions: vertical and horizontal mob-

bing (1–7 items), and vertical mobbing (8–10 items). Statement examples include: “How often your performance is being criticized as unjustified by your colleagues or administrator” and “How often you are being assigned absurd duties and more trivial or unpleasant tasks by your administrator”. The statements were measured with a five-point Likert-type scale between “never” and 5 “always”. High values indicate mobbing.

To measure the revenge thoughts of academicians, Bradfield and Aquino’s (1999) reworded version of the revenge thoughts scale originally developed by Wade (1989) was used. This instrument is unidimensional and contains seven scale items. Statement examples include: “I’ll make them pay”, and “I wish that something bad would happen to them”. The statements were measured with a five-point Likert-type scale between “not at all accurate” and 5 “very accurate”. High values indicate revenge thoughts.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Sample characteristics

A majority of the participants were males (70.9%) and married (68.9%). Most of the participants had doctorate degrees (70.4%) and were between 26 and 35 years old. Approximately one-third (29.1%) of the participants had administrative duties, and their academic rank was distributed as follows: research assistant (19.9%), instructor (29.6%), assistant professor (22.4%), associate professor (19.4%), and professor (8.7%). Most of the participants had more than 11 years of employment (**Table 1**).

Test for validity and reliability

To test the dimensionality of the mobbing scale and the unidimensionality of the revenge thought scale, we used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). For mobbing, we ran CFA with all core variables. CFA results provided strong model fit indices (chi-square = 74.8, $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.925; AGFI = 0.878; CFI = 0.966; RMSEA = 0.78). Similarly, CFA results of the 7-item revenge thought scale yielded good model fit indices (chi-square = 41.2, $p < 0.001$; GFI = 0.922; AGFI = 0.869; CFI = 0.957; RMSEA = 0.79). All CFA values meet the criteria suggested in the literature for assessing model fit (Browne and Cudeck, 1993; Byrne, 2001).

The reliability analysis using the Cronbach’s alpha coefficient indicated a high reliability score of 0.915 for the mobbing scale and 0.910 for the revenge thought scale. These values indicate that all scales were highly reliable.

Correlation analysis

Correlation analyses (**Table 2**) show a significant and positive relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts ($r = 0.614$). According to Cohen (1988), if the coefficient r is between 0.5 and 0.7, it is considered to be a high relationship. Therefore, it can be said that the relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts is high. In addition, there is a significant and positive relationship between the subscales of mobbing and revenge thoughts. When demographic variables were examined, it was observed that the title had a significant and positive relationship with revenge thoughts ($r = 0.216$). In other words, as the academicians’ titles increased, their revenge thoughts also increased.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Variables	Categories	F	%	Variables	Categories	F	%
Gender	Male	139	70.9	Marital status	Married	135	68.9
	Female	57	29.1		Single	61	31.1
Age	Under 25	10	5.1	Title	Research Assistant	39	19.9
	26–35	73	37.2		Instructor	58	29.6
	36–45	57	29.1		Assistant Professor	44	22.4
	46–55	38	19.4		Associate Professor	38	19.4
	Over 56	18	9.2		Professor	17	8.7
Degree	Undergraduate	10	5.1	Total length of working life	Less than 5 years	41	20.9
	Master’s	48	24.5		6 to 10 years	44	22.4
	Doctorate	138	70.4		11 to 15 years	30	16.3
Administrative duties	No	139	70.9		16 to 20 years	22	11.2
	Yes	57	29.1		21 to 25 years	30	15.3
				More than 26 years	29	14.8	

Hierarchical regression analysis

For the purpose of this study, to test hypotheses, hierarchical regression analysis was performed between revenge thoughts and independent variables. **Table 3** shows the results of the hierarchical regression analysis (two steps) between revenge thoughts and vertical and horizontal mobbing. According to the results of the analysis, vertical/horizontal mobbing has a significant and positive effect on revenge thoughts ($\beta = 0.638$, $p < 0.001$) in support of the first hypothesis. Additionally, no significant relationship could be established between the control variables and revenge thoughts.

Table 4 shows the results of the hierarchical regression analysis (two steps) between revenge thoughts and vertical mobbing. According to the results of the analysis, vertical mobbing has a significant and positive effect on revenge thoughts ($\beta = 0.424$, $p < 0.001$) in support of the second hypothesis. Additionally, the effect of the title on revenge thoughts continued to be significant in the second step of the hierarchical regression. High titles bring high power; therefore, it can be said that academicians may think of them as a means of revenge.

Table 2. Results of correlation analysis

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender			1				
2. Marital status			.152*	1			
3. Age			-.206**	-.468**	1		
4. Education			-.083	-.151*	.112	1	
5. Title			-.204**	-.375**	.544**	.431**	1
6. Administrative duties			-.014	-.188**	.185**	.074	.351**
7. Income			-.271**	-.400**	.350**	.489**	.667**
8. Total working length			-.151*	-.455**	.883**	.111	.613**
9. Vertical/horizontal mobbing	2.27	1.05	-.024	-.047	.131	.008	.209**
10. Vertical mobbing	2.36	1.03	-.040	.161*	-.226**	.067	.000
11. Mobbing	2.32	.92	-.036	.064	-.052	.042	.120
12. Revenge thoughts	2.38	1.08	-.134	-.020	.066	.121	.216**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 2. Results of correlation analysis (continued)

Variables	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender						
2. Marital status						
3. Age						
4. Education						
5. Title						
6. Administrative duties	1					
7. Income	.192**	1				
8. Total working life length	.215**	.377**	1			
9. Vertical/horizontal mobbing	.046	-.086	.162*	1		
10. Vertical mobbing	-.076	-.114	-.210**	.558**	1	
11. Mobbing	-.016	-.113	-.026	.885**	.880**	1
12. Revenge thoughts	-.005	.035	.083	.645**	.437**	.614**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 3. Results of hierarchical regression analysis between revenge thoughts and vertical/horizontal mobbing (and the control variables)

Independent Variables	Revenge Thoughts	
	Step 1	Step 2
1. Gender	-.134	-.110
2. Marital status	.004	.027
3. Age	-.067	-.034
4. Education	.079	.076
5. Title	.413*	.108
6. Administrative duties	-.089	-.056
7. Income	-.266**	.007
8. Total working life length	-.019	-.059
9. Vertical/horizontal mobbing	-	.638*
F	2.650	17.016
R ²	.102	.452
Adjusted R ²	.063	.425

Note: Standardized beta values were used, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Table 4. Results of hierarchical regression analysis between revenge thoughts and vertical mobbing (and the control variables)

Independent Variables	Revenge Thoughts	
	Step 1	Step 2
1. Gender	-.134	-.091
2. Marital status	.004	-.015
3. Age	-.067	.014
4. Education	.079	.044
5. Title	.413*	.259**
6. Administrative duties	-.089	-.053
7. Income	-.266**	-.153
8. Total working life length	-.019	.045
9. Vertical mobbing	-	.424*
F	2.650	7.202
R ²	.102	.258
Adjusted R ²	.063	.223

Note: Standardized beta values were used, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

Table 5. Results of hierarchical regression analysis between revenge thoughts and mobbing (and the control variables)

Independent Variables	Revenge Thoughts	
	Step 1	Step 2
1. Gender	-.134	-.088
2. Marital status	.004	.001
3. Age	-.067	.013
4. Education	.079	.050
5. Title	.413*	.131
6. Administrative duties	-.089	-.044
7. Income	-.266**	-.033
8. Total working life length	-.019	.010
9. Mobbing	-	.590*
F	2.650	14.295
R ²	.102	.409
Adjusted R ²	.063	.380

Note: Standardized beta values were used, * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$

analysis (two steps) between revenge thoughts and mobbing. According to the results of the analysis, mobbing has a significant and positive effect on revenge thoughts ($\beta = 0.590$, $p < 0.001$) in support of the third hypothesis. An R^2 of 0.409 for the model shows that almost half of the variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by the independent variables used in this study. Additionally, no significant relationship could be established between the control variables and revenge thoughts.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

There are many studies in the literature that deal with mobbing and revenge thoughts separately. However, studies investigating the relationships between the two variables are limited (Moreno-Jimenez et al., 2009). Especially in HEIs, no research has been found in the sample group that includes academicians. The results of this study focused on the relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts will contribute to the literature on management and organizational behavior.

The findings of our study show a significant and positive relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts. In addition, the same results were observed in the relationship between the subscales of mobbing and revenge thoughts. According to these results, three research hypotheses were accepted in this study. In addition, correlation analysis shows that the relationship between vertical and horizontal mobbing and revenge thoughts is higher than in vertical mobbing. Regression analysis also confirms that the revenge thoughts of academicians would be seriously affected in the case of mobbing by managers or colleagues. Cassel (2011) reported in a literature review on academic mobbing that revenge may develop in academicians exposed to mobbing behavior by their managers or colleagues. Moreno-Jimenez et al. (2009) found a significant and positive relationship between mobbing and revenge thoughts in their empirical research on telecommunication workers ($r = 0.320$; $p < 0.01$). Jones (2009) states that an employee treated unfairly by a manager will have a sense of revenge. In summary, since the concept of mobbing is described as being exposed to undeserved behaviors, it is highly probable that the employee exposed to mobbing will have or develop a sense of revenge.

On the other hand, of the demographic variables in our study, the title has a significant and positive relationship with revenge thoughts ($r = 0.216$). Therefore, as the title increases, the idea of revenge also increases. Thus, it could be said that high titling is considered a means of revenge. In addition, in the hierarchical regression analysis, it was observed that the title and vertical mobbing, which are among the independent variables, affect revenge thoughts significantly and positively. Of course, it is known that increasing the title gives academicians more status and power. Therefore, the academicians who have been subjected to bad behavior before may have thought that, as their titles increase, they will have the opportunity to take revenge.

In the literature, there is a consensus in research conducted in various sectors that mobbing negatively affects organizations and employees. For example, Querishi et al. (2015) emphasize that mobbing creates high stress on employees, decreasing productivity and creating a conflict environment by damaging business peace. In other studies, it is emphasized that mobbing reduces job satisfaction (Cerci and Dumludag, 2019) and organizational commitment (Tengilimoglu, Mansur, and Dziegielewski, 2010) of employees, increases turnover intention (Yildiz, 2018), and even creates a risk of suicide for the victim by adversely affecting their psychological health (Maurizio et al., 2008). It is also possible that mobbing behaviors, which have such negative effects, create a sense of revenge on employees. Joao and Proteleda (2019) argue that mobbing disrupts relations among employees in the work environment, and Benevides (2012) argues that advanced mobbing can trigger revenge behaviors.

To sum up, employees are the dynamics of organizations, and there are many studies showing that negative relations among employees and the negative consequences of negative relations are seen in the organizational environment. Soyulu and Sheehy-Skeffington (2015) stated that harassment in the workplace, such as mobbing behaviors among groups, impacts the well-being and productivity of employees and organizations. As explained earlier, in addition to the negativity seen in the employee who suffers from mobbing behavior, perhaps the most important outcome is the formation of a sense of revenge, because there is evidence that revenge could serve as a way of perpetuating violence (Hamber and Wilson, 2002). Cogenli and Barli (2013) emphasize that the idea of revenge leads to mobbing behavior, and similarly, Saricam and Cetinkaya (2017) suggest that victimization leads to revenge, and revenge leads to mobbing.

Consequently, considering that mobbing and revenge behaviors are among the negative behaviors that harm both individuals and organizations (Cropanzano et al., 2017), it is clear that administrative efforts are required to prevent the possible mobbing-revenge-mobbing cycle in organizations. First of all, the behaviors that may create tension should be

discovered by top management early and should be dealt with effectively (Raver, 2013). Employees who are particularly prone to mobbing should be kept as far away as possible from decision-making mechanisms. In addition, managers should make a culture of justice prevalent throughout the organization so that most problems that may be experienced among employees can be eliminated.

Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on academicians in HEIs and tested hypotheses in that specific context. Therefore, the results of this study should not be generalized to other populations. In addition, statistical limitations should be considered in the interpretation of the results due to the small sample size used. Hence, future research should test the consistency of results by applying similar data collection and analysis methods to other research groups and to different HEIs (including private HEIs). Additionally, similar studies should be conducted in different countries and cultures because tolerance levels of mobbing and revenge perception may not be similar in societies with different cultures.

REFERENCES

- Akin, M, Ozdevecioglu, M & Unlu, O 2012, The relationship between revenge intention and forgiveness tendency with mental health of employees in organizations. *Amme Idaresi Dergisi*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 77-97.
- Ambrose, M L, Seabright, M & Schminke, M 2000, Sabotage in the workplace: The role of justice. *Proceedings of the International Association for Business and Society*, 11, pp. 17-27.
- Bies, R J & Tripp, T M 2001, *A passion for justice: The rationality and morality of revenge*. in Cropanzano, R (ed) 2001, *Justice in the workplace*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Publishers, Mahwah, New Jersey.
- Bradfield, M & Aquino, K 1999, The effects of blame attributions and offender likableness on forgiveness and revenge in the workplace. *Journal of Management*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 607-631.
- Browne, M W & Cudeck, R 1993, Alternative ways of assessing model fit. in Bollen, K A & Long, J S (eds.), *Testing structural equation models*. Newbury Park, CA, Sage, pp. 136-162.
- Byrne, B M 2001, *Structural equation modeling with AMOS—Basic concepts, applications, and programming*. Mahwah, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Benevides, S G G 2012, *Mobbing: A not so new phenomenon*. A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Business Administration, University of Phoenix.

- Bernstein, M & Crosby, F 1980, An empirical examination of relative deprivation theory. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, vol. 16, no. 5, pp. 442-456.
- Bordia, P, Kiazad, K, Restubog, S L D , DiFonzo, N , Stenson, N & Tang, R L 2014, Rumor as revenge in the workplace. *Group & Organization Management*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 363-388. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601114540750>>.
- Cassel, M A 2011, Bullying in academe: Prevalent, significant, and incessant. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, vol. 4, no. 5, pp. 33-44.
- Cerci, P A & Dumludag, D 2019, Life satisfaction and job satisfaction among university faculty: The impact of working conditions, academic performance and relative income. *Social Indicators Research*, 144, pp. 785-806. <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-018-02059-8>>.
- Cogenli, M Z & Barli, O 2013, The exposure of psychological violence (mobbing) in universities and an application to the academicians. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, pp. 1174-1178. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.10.010>>.
- Cohen, J 1988, *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences*. (2nd ed.), New Jersey, Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Cosgrove, L & Konstam, V 2008, Forgiveness and forgetting: Clinical implications for mental health counselors. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 1-13. <<https://doi.org/10.17744/mehc.30.1.rlh1250015728274>>.
- Cropanzano, R, Anthony, E L, Daniels, S R & Hall, A V 2017, Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 1-38. <<https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2015.0099>>.
- Dunn, S 2003, *What's going on with mobbing, bullying and work harassment internationally*. Workplace mobbing Institute, available at: <<https://workplacebullying.org/press/web-pronews.html>>.
- Einarsen, S, Hoel, H, Zapf, D & Cooper, C L 2003, The concept of bullying at work: The European tradition. in Einarsen, S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D. and Cooper, C.L. (eds), *Bullying and Emotional Abuse in the Workplace*, Taylor & Francis, London, pp. 3-30.
- Einarsen, S, Hoel, H & Notelaers, G 2009, Measuring exposure to bullying and harassment at work: Validity, factor structure and psychometric properties of the negative acts questionnaire-revised. *Work & Stress*, vol. 23, no. 1, pp. 24-44. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/02678370902815673>>.
- Foster, P J 2012, Leader-member-exchange and the workplace bully. Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Psychology College of Arts and Sciences, Kansas State University.
- Gouldner, A W 1960, The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 161-178.
- Greenberg, J 1993, Stealing in the name of justice: Informational and interpersonal moderators of theft reactions to underpayment inequity. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, vol. 54, no. 1, pp. 81-103. <<https://doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1993.1004>>.
- Güllü, S & Sahin, S 2017, The relationship between organizational justice and organizational revenge of physical education and sports teachers. *Journal of Human Sciences*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 3729-3741. <<https://doi.org/10.14687/jhs.v14i4.4776>>.
- Hamber, B., and Wilson, R.A. 2002. Symbolic closure through memory, reparation and revenge in post-conflict societies. *Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 35-53. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/147548300110111553>>.
- Heinemann, P 1972, *Mobbning-Gruppvåld bland barn och vuxna (Mobbing-Group Violence by Children and Adults)*. Natur and Kultur, Stockholm.
- International Labour Organization Report. retrieved December 15, 2019. <<http://www.ilo.org>>.
- Joao, A L S & Portelada, A F S 2019, mobbing and its impact on interpersonal relationships at the workplace. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 34, no. 13, pp. 2797-2812. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260516662850>>.
- Jones, D A 2009, Getting even with one's supervisor and one's organization: Relationships among types of injustice, desires for revenge, and counterproductive work behaviors. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 30, pp. 525-542. <<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.563>>.
- Jones, D A 2010, Getting even for interpersonal mistreatment in the workplace: Triggers of revenge motives and behavior. in Greenberg, J (ed) *Insidious workplace behavior*, New York: Routledge.
- Kim, S H & Smith, R H 1993, Revenge and conflict escalation. *Negotiation Journal*, 9, pp. 37-43. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1571-9979.1993.tb00688.x>>.
- Kim, S H, Smith, R H & Brigham, N L 1998, Effects of power imbalance and the presence of third parties on reactions to harm: Upward and downward revenge. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 353-361. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167298244002>>.
- King, C & Piotrowski, C 2015, Bullying of educators by educators: Incivility in higher education. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 1-6.
- Leymann, H 1996, The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 165-184. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414853>>.
- Leymann, H & Gustafsson, A 1996, mobbing at work and the development of post-traumatic stress disorders. *European Jour-*

- nal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 251-275. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414858>>.
- Lorenz, K 1963, *On aggression*. Harcourt Brace, San Diego, CA.
- Marongui, P & Newman, G 1987, *Vengeance: The fight against injustice*. New Jersey, Roman and Littlefield.
- Maurizio, P, Lester, D, Innamorati, M, De Pisa, E, Iliceto, P, Puccinno, M, Nastro, P F, Roberto, T & Paolo, G 2008, Suicide risk and exposure to mobbing. *Work*, vol. 31, no. 2, pp. 237-243.
- Moreno-Jimenez, B, Rodriguez-Munoz, A, Pastor, J C, Sanz-Verge, A I & Garrosa, E 2009, The moderating effects of psychological detachment and thoughts of revenge in workplace bullying. *Personality and Individual Difference*, 46, pp. 359-364. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.10.031>>.
- Nelson, D, Little, L & Simmons, B 2007, Health among leaders: Positive and negative effect, engagement and burnout, forgiveness and revenge. *Journal of Management Studies*, vol. 44, no. 2, pp. 243-260. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00687.x>>.
- Niedl, K 1996, mobbing and well-being: Economic and personnel development implications. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 239-249. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414857>>.
- Ozturk, H, Sokmen, S, Yilmaz, F & Cilingir, D 2008, Measuring mobbing experiences of academic nurses: Development of a mobbing scale. *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners*, vol. 20, pp. 435-442. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-7599.2008.00347.x>>.
- Raskauskas, J & Skrabec, C 2011, Bullying and occupational stress in academia: Experiences of victims of workplace bullying in New Zealand universities. *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, vol. 35, no. 1, pp. 18-36. <<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-5154-8013-1>>.
- Raver, J L 2013, Counterproductive work behavior and conflict: Merging complementary domains. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research*, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 151-159. <<https://doi.org/10.1111/ncmr.12013>>.
- Saricam, H & Cetinkaya, C 2017, Exploring revenge as a mediator between bullying and victimisation in gifted and talented students. *Current Issues in Personality Psychology*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 102-111. <<https://doi.org/10.5114/cipp.2018.72267>>.
- Sener, E, Cetinkaya, F F & Akkoca, Y 2017, Hidden side of the employee relations: The relationship between impression management and revenge intention. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, vol. 6, no. 7, pp. 73-84.
- Simons, S R, Stark, R B & De Marco, R F 2011, A new, four-item instrument to measure workplace bullying. *Research in Nursing & Health*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 132-140. <<https://doi.org/10.1002/nur.20422>>.
- Skarlicki, D P & Folger, R 1997, Retaliation in the workplace: The roles of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 82, no. 3, pp. 434-443. <<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.3.434>>.
- Skarlicki, D P, Folger, R & Tesluk, P 1999, Personality as a moderator in the relationship between fairness and retaliation. *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 42, vol. 1, pp. 100-108. <<https://doi.org/10.2307/256877>>.
- Sommers, J A, Schell, T L & Vodanovich, S J 2002, Developing a measure of individual differences in organizational revenge. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, vol. 17 no. 2, pp. 207-222.
- Soylu, S & Sheehy-Skeffington, J 2015, Asymmetric intergroup bullying: The enactment and maintenance of societal inequality at work. *Human Relations*, vol. 68, no. 7, pp. 1099-1129. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726714552001>>.
- Steffgen, G, Sischka, P, Schmidt, A F, Kohl, D & Happ, C 2016, The Luxembourg Workplace mobbing Scale: Psychometric properties of a short instrument in three different languages. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 164-171. <<https://doi.org/10.1027/1015-5759/a000381>>.
- Stuckless, N & Goranson, R 1992, The vengeance scale: Development of a measure of attitudes toward revenge. *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 25-42.
- Tengilimoglu, D, Mansur, F A & Dziegielewska, S F 2010, The effect of the mobbing on organizational commitment in the hospital setting: A field study. *Journal of Social Service Research*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 128-141. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/01488370903578082>>.
- Thau, S, Crossley, C, Bennett, R J & Sczesny, S 2007, The relationship between trust, attachment, and antisocial work behaviors. *Human Relations*, vol. 60, no. 8, pp. 1155-1179. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726707081658>>.
- The Fifth European Working Conditions Survey 2010, retrieved December 19, 2019. <<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu>>
- Tripp, T M, Bies, R J & Aquino, K 2007, A vigilante model of justice: revenge, reconciliation, forgiveness, and avoidance. *Social Justice Research*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 10-34. <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-007-0030-3>>.
- Tripp, T M & Bies, R J 2010, "Righteous" anger and revenge in the workplace: The fantasies, the feuds, the forgiveness. in Potegal M., Stemmler G., Spielberger C. (eds.) *International Handbook of Anger*. Springer, New York.
- Venkataramani, V & Dalal, R S 2007, Who helps and harms whom? Relational antecedents of interpersonal helping and harming in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, vol. 92, no. 4, pp. 952-966. <<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.92.4.952>>.

- Volk, A A, Dane, A V & Marini, Z A 2014, What is bullying? A theoretical redefinition. *Development Review*, vol. 34 no. 4, pp. 327-343. <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.d r.2014.09.001>>.
- Vveinhardt, J, Fominiene, V B & Andriukaitiene, R 2019, Encounter with bullying in sport and its consequences for youth: Amateur athletes' approach. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16, p. 4685. <<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16234685>>.
- Wade, S H 1989, The development of a scale to measure forgiveness. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fuller Theological Seminary, California.
- Yildiz, S M 2018, An empirical analysis of the leader-member exchange and employee turnover intentions mediated by mobbing: Evidence from sport organizations. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 480-497. <<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2018.1432374>>.
- Yildiz, S M 2020, A New mobbing Scale for Academicians (MS-A) in Higher Education Institutions. *African Educational Research Journal*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 831-840. <<https://doi.org/10.30918/AERJ.84.20.170>>.
- Zapf, D. 1999, Organizational, work group related and personal causes of mobbing/bullying at work. *International Journal of Manpower*, 20, pp. 70-85. <<https://doi.org/10.1108/01437729910268669>>.

Received: October 11, 2021

Approved: August 13, 2022

DOI: 10.20985/1980-5160.2022.v17n2.1756

How to cite: Yildiz, S.M., Gullu, S. (2022). Relationships between workplace mobbing behaviors and revenge thoughts: empirical results from higher education institutions. *Revista S&G* 17, 2. <https://revistasg.emnuvens.com.br/sg/article/view/1756>