


Mobbing, Teacher Victimization and Faculty Trust: A Structural Equation Model

Research Article

Kıvanç BOZKUS¹

¹Artvin Çoruh University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Sciences, Artvin, Turkey  0000-0002-4787-3664

To cite this article: Bozkus, K. (2022). Mobbing, teacher victimization and faculty trust: A structural equation model, *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 14 (1), 77-90.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><i>Article History:</i></p> <p>Received: 21.03.2021</p> <p>Available online: 13.02.2022</p>	<p>This research aims to reveal the effects among teacher victimization, mobbing and faculty trust by constructing a structural equation model. The data were collected from 1144 teachers working in the Sanliurfa province of Turkey by cross-sectional surveying with a form prepared online that consisted of questions regarding demographics, multidimensional teacher victimization scale, the mobbing scale, and the omnibus t-scale. The results showed that mobbing affects teacher victimization and faculty trust, teacher victimization negatively affects faculty trust. It is concluded that mobbed teachers think that they are victimized by the faculty and they lose their trust in the faculty.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">© 2022 IOJES. All rights reserved</p> <p>Keywords: Teacher, principal, school violence, school psychology</p>

Introduction

School violence is a multifaceted and multilayered problem and how it affects administrators, teachers, and students has become a major concern for all stakeholders. School safety is an important issue because a safe teaching and learning environment is essential for the effectiveness and efficiency of an education system. The studies conducted on school violence show that the number of violent acts (bullying, teacher victimization, mobbing, etc.) in school is on the rise, which makes all stakeholders feel violence is an inevitable part of school life and schools are not as safe as they should be.

Administrators, teachers, and students need to feel safe from violence in their schools to be able to focus on their teaching and learning. However, school violence (bullying among students, mobbing, teacher

¹ Corresponding author's address: Artvin Çoruh Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Merkez Artvin
Telephone: +904662151043-2365
Fax: +904662151042
e-mail: kbozkus@artvin.edu.tr
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15345/iojes.2022.01.006>

victimization) has become ordinary and incidents in which administrators bully the teachers, students violently attack their peers, teachers and other school personnel have become relatively common.

Teacher victimization, which is a comparatively understudied and underrated issue, requires more attention from policymakers, administrators, researchers and so on because it affects not only the victimized teacher but the students, other teachers, effectiveness and efficiency of schools, education system and the larger community itself. Teachers' being a victim due to a school-related reason cause fear and anxiety within them and lead them to consider school environment as a psychologically distressing place to be, which prevents them from taking initiatives and do their job as professionally as expected of them (Ozdere & Terzi, 2018). Besides, their emotional and physical well-being, their commitment, job performance, job satisfaction and so on are closely related to how safe they feel at school (Yang et al., 2019). Moreover, the lost days of work, lost wages, training and replacement of teachers leaving the school or profession, medical and psychological care expenses are some of the other detrimental results of the problem. Given the damaging effects of teacher victimization, there is an urgent need to take effective and preventive measures to respond to teacher victimization.

The starting point of this research is the idea that violence tends to occur when there is no trust or lack of trust among the parties. In the literature review, there are no studies that analyze the relation between teacher victimization and faculty trust. Thinking that teacher safety is closely related to faculty trust, this study is conducted to investigate whether there is a relationship between faculty trust and teacher victimization. It is hoped to shed light on a different dimension of the problem, which is the effect of faculty trust on teacher victimization (mobbing and violence directed to teachers by students and others). It is important to reveal a relation among mobbing, teacher victimization and faculty trust for a better teaching environment and thus student success.

Mobbing

Mobbing is usually defined as the set of hostile actions such as verbal, physical, sexual aggression, harassment, bullying, isolation, professional discredit, etc. and unethical communication which are systematically, repeatedly and intentionally directed to one individual by one or some people to disturb victim's mental, physical, social well-being in an organizational context. These actions happen quite often (almost every day) and persist at least six months against the same person which aims to injure the victim and to keep him out of the workplace and result in considerable psychic, psychosomatic and social misery on the victim's part (Leymann, 1990). Such behaviors may not seem hostile on the surface but just because it is being constantly repeated, it will affect the victim negatively in the long run and serve the perpetrator's ultimate goal which could be the exclusion of individuals/groups of individuals from the organization (Cornoiu & Gyorgy, 2013).

Mobbing which is described as psychological terror is an emotional offense (Leymann, 1990). It could stem from factors related to the characteristics of the aggressor (jealousy, racism, prejudice, psychological problems, stereotyping, etc.), the victim (his/her being an intelligent, productive, creative, well-educated person with high intellectual capacity might cause jealousy and make them target (Cobanoğlu, 2005), the organization (bad management, high-stress workplace, unethical practices and unfairness, nepotism, etc.), or the society and culture (economic factors, bad living environment, high crime rates, inequality, poverty, etc. (Kirel, 2007). In short, retribution to protect self-esteem, lack of social skills, groups' tendency to choose a scapegoat and policies of organizations are some of the most important reasons for mobbing (Poussard & Camuroglu, 2009).

Leymann (1990) identified 45 mobbing actions and classified them into five categories. These are as follow: 1. Effects on self-expression and communication refer to hostile actions such as not letting them express

and/or support their opinions and ideas, being insulted, mocked, criticized, terrorized, threatened and so on. 2. Effects on social contacts refer to the isolation of the victim. As the name suggests the victims are not talked to or listened to, they are treated as if they are invisible and so on. 3. Effects on personal reputation refer to hostile actions that aim to harm their reputation by talking badly about their physical, personal, mental characteristics, religious or political beliefs, calling them names and so on. 4. Effects on the occupational situation and quality of life are about the hostile actions that harm their professional lives; giving them meaningless jobs, new tasks, tasks below or beyond their qualifications, or not giving any tasks at all. 5. The effects on physical health are about the physical well-being of the victims. The hostile actions could include being forced to do a physically dangerous job, physical violence, abuse, damaging workplace or home, sexual harassment and so on.

Teacher Victimization

Schools need to be free from violence and safe havens for all stakeholders for learning and teaching to take place effectively and efficiently. According to Maslow's needs hierarchy, safety needs are basic needs (Lester et al., 1983) and it is very important for school stakeholders to feel safe at school for effective learning and teaching processes (Donmez, 2001; Karal, 2011). While school administrators and teachers have important responsibilities for the safety of students in schools (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009), they have become the target of violence in many cases due to some school-related causes and are concerned about their safety (Cinar, 2007; Meadows, 2014). Studies show that the incidents of violence against teachers are on the rise worldwide (Daniels, 2007; Espelage et al., 2013; Wilson, Douglas, & Lyon, 2011; Khoury-Kassabri, Astor, & Benbenishty, 2009; Dazuka & Dalbert, 2007; Ozkiliç 2012; Cumaoglu, 2007).

It is reported that teachers generally experience different types of violent acts such as disrespect, bullying, threats, intimidation, damage to their belongings, physical attack (APA, 2016; Espelage et al., 2013; Gregory et al., 2012; McMahon et al. 2014; Tomasek, 2008; Wilson et al. 2011; Atmaca & Ontas, 2014; Ozdemir, 2012). The perpetrators are usually students, parents or groups and the identity of the perpetrator affects the type and severity of the violence (McMahon et al., 2014; Tomasek, 2008; Atmaca & Ontas, 2014; Martinez et al., 2016). Besides, the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, faculty, school size, school type, school resources, school location, school climate, disciplinary practices, teachers' qualifications, competency may affect teacher victimization (Gregory et al. 2012; Rose, 2009; Ozdere & Terzi, 2018).

In the studies carried out on teacher victimization, it is stated that although it cannot be eradicated, the seriousness of problem should be emphasized and the cooperation of institutions, families, media, similar organizations and society are developed to prevent, intervene, lessen the incidents (Ozdemir, 2012; Ozdere & Terzi, 2018). In other words, teacher victimization is indirect violence against students, the institution, the education system, and the society and all members of the community work together accordingly to address the problem (Espelage et al., 2013; Galand et al., 2007; Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2009; Martinez et al., 2016; McMahon et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011). However, it is stated that policymakers, researchers and the media do not pay enough attention to the problem, and thus not many efficient preventing, intervening policies and measures are produced (Ozdere & Terzi, 2018; Wilson et al., 2011).

Faculty Trust

The key to success in schools is effective teaching practices and management, and these cannot be achieved without faculty trust. Therefore, one of the most important duties of the principals as a leader is to create an environment that fosters trust among school stakeholders.

A trust-based organizational culture is crucial for the effectiveness and efficiency of schools, as it supports collaboration among school stakeholders, reduces uncertainty and maintains order. Trust is usually defined as an individual or a group's being willing to be vulnerable to another party based on the confidence

that the other party is benevolent, reliable, competent, honest, and open (Hoy, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tarter, 2004). As the definition suggests trust has five pillars (benevolence, reliability, competency, honesty, and openness) and both parties are willing to become defenseless because they are confident that neither parties will be exploited (Hoy, 2002; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Hoy & Tarter, 2004; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998).

For the trust, there needs to be interdependence between the parties (Hoy, 2002; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998) which means both the parties will provide what is asked of them when they are asked (Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Hoy, 2002; Mishra, 1996; Rotter, 1967). Interdependence requires vulnerability and the degree of confidence one has in the face of vulnerability and risk is the degree of trust. There is no trust without benevolence which refers to the belief that both parties' expectations will be met, their self-interests will be protected, no harm will come to the trusting party, and their vulnerability will not be exploited (Baier, 1986; Cummings & Bromily, 1996; Hosmer, 1995; Hoy, 2002; Mishra, 1996; Putnam, 1993). Reliability is the combination of dependability and predictability, which means both parties will know what to expect from each other and believe that they both act in accordance with each other's interests (Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Hosmer, 1995; Hoy, 2002). The trust needs to be established that both parties are reliable, dependable, attentive and ready to take responsibility for their actions while they do not resort to deceptive ways to protect their self-interests only (Govier, 1992). Competency refers to the qualifications, knowledge, skill and expert knowledge one should have to perform as expected and consistent with standards suitable to the task. No matter how benevolent and reliable one party is, the trust may not occur if they are not competent enough to perform as expected and consistent with the standards to meet the expectations of the trusting party (Baier, 1986; Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Hoy, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran, 2000; Mishra, 1996). Honesty is related to the consistency between what is said and what is done, which means one's being ready to accept the responsibility for their actions and not distorting the truth not to face the consequences of their actions or to protect their self-interests or to get away with them. It is about the truthfulness, integrity, and authenticity of a person or a group. (Baier, 1986; Cummings & Bromily, 1996; Hoy, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Openness is related to how much relevant information is shared with the other party. Sharing personal or organizational information makes the trusting party vulnerable because it means giving oneself away (Butler & Cantrell, 1984; Hoy, 2002; Mishra, 1996). Openness nurtures trust, and vice versa (Kramer, Brewer, & Hanna, 1996).

Method

Design

The study employed the ex post facto co-relational causal design (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This design is used when research variables already exist in nature, leaving no room for manipulation (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012). Since there is a lack of manipulation, this design generates results which have weaker causality comparing to the experimental design. Yet, it can reveal the causality when an experimentation is not possible. Thus, it can be considered as an alternative method to the experimental design.

The data were collected by surveys. The perception and attitudes of a large sample can be demonstrated by this method, and its validity and reliability can be demonstrated with standard data collection tools and thus generalizable results can be obtained (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2013). When the data is collected at once, it is cross-sectional and when it is collected more than once in wider periods, longitudinal surveying is performed (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012, p. 394). In this study, the data were collected by cross-sectional surveying.

Participants

The population of the study consists of about 26000 educators working in the Sanliurfa province of Turkey. Among them, 2600 teachers were selected randomly and were sent links to the online data collection tool. A total of 1144 teachers participated in the study. The descriptive statistics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	533	46.6
	Female	611	53.4
Duty	Teacher	872	76.2
	Principal	101	8.8
	Deputy principal	171	14.9
Seniority	0-5 years	501	43.8
	6-10 years	215	18.8
	11-15 years	129	11.3
	16 years and above	299	26.1
School Type	Kindergarten	85	7.5
	Primary School	404	35.3
	Secondary School	357	31.2
	High School	297	26.0

Data Collection Tools

1. Multidimensional Teacher Victimization Scale: The Multidimensional Teacher Victimization Scale (MTVS) was developed by Yang et al. (2019) and is a 24-item self-report rating scale for measuring teachers' perceptions of how often they have been victims of violent behavior perpetrated by students. It consists six subscales, which reflects six forms of teacher victimization (TV): (1) physical TV, (2) social TV, (3) verbal TV, (4) cyber TV, (5) sexual harassment, and (6) personal property offenses. The scale was adapted into Turkish by the author.

2. The Mobbing Scale: The Mobbing Scale was developed by Aiello et al. (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Laleoglu and Ozmete (2013) was used in the study. The scale consists of questions aimed at determining mobbing behaviors based on interpersonal relationships. It consists of 48 items that determine the level of relations of the employee with their colleagues, whether the individual is exposed to physical, psychological violence and harassment, the level of feedback about the job he/she is doing, whether the opinion of the individual is received or not, and whether he/she is informed about the changes in the business. The high scores obtained from the scale indicate that the employees are mobbed, while the low scores indicate that they are not mobbed.

3. The Omnibus T-Scale: The Omnibus T-Scale consists of 26 items that measure three dimensions of trust (trust in the principal, trust in colleagues, and trust in clients (students and parents)). The scale was developed by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2003) and adapted into Turkish by the author. It consists three subscales which reflects the source of faculty trust: (1) principal, (2) colleagues, and (3) clients. The reliabilities of the three subscales typically range from .90 to .98. Factor analytic studies of the Omnibus T-Scale support the construct and discriminant validity of the concept.

Data Collection

The data were collected with a form prepared online. Compared to classical paper forms, online forms can save cost and time, can be easily applied to large audiences and facilitate data analysis (Fan & Yan, 2010;

Selm & Jankowski, 2006). Also, online forms can be considered equivalent to paper forms since they do not affect the research results (Huang, 2006). The online form included questions regarding demographics (gender, duty, seniority, school type) and 3 scales.

Data Analysis

A structural equation model was constructed to reveal the effects among teacher victimization, mobbing and faculty trust. The data were analyzed with R, an open-source statistical programming language (Ihaka & Gentleman, 1996). R has been widely used in the last 20 years (Field, Miles & Field, 2012). Experts create package programs to perform certain analyzes with R (Beaujean, 2014). Explanatory factor analysis is done with the psych (Revelle, 2018) package in the R library. Confirmatory factor analysis is done with the lavaan (Rosseel, 2012) package. Multivariate normality assumption analysis of the data is done with the mvn (Korkmaz, Goksuluk & Harmless, 2014) package. When the multivariate normality assumption is analyzed, the Doornik-Hansen (2008), Henze-Zirkler (1990), Mardia (1970, 1974) and Royston (1992) tests are found to be significant ($p < .001$). Therefore, exploratory factor analysis is done with principal axis factoring (PAF) (Strahan, 1999), confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling was performed by diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS) calculation (Mindrila, 2010).

Results

Mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and correlations of the study variables are shown in Table 2. According to means, teachers of the study trust their faculty and do not feel victimized and mobbed. All the correlations among the variables are significant and on a low level.

Table 2. Statistics of the variables

	Teacher Victimization	Faculty Trust	Mobbing
Mean	1.09	4.10	2.15
Standard deviation	0.22	0.68	0.52
Skewness	4.80	-0.57	2.52
Kurtosis	29.4	0.33	10.9
Faculty Trust	-0.33*		
Mobbing	0.32*	-0.40*	

* $p < .001$

The structural equation model constructed to reveal the effects among teacher victimization, mobbing and faculty trust had a good fit to the data (AGFI=.96, CFI=.98, TLI=.98, RMSEA=.02). To save place and easy understanding of the effects, the simplified drawing of the model is presented in Figure 1. According to the model, mobbing affects teacher victimization on a low level ($\beta=.37$, $p<.001$). This implies that mobbing causes teachers to feel victimized. Also, teacher victimization negatively affects faculty trust on a low level ($\beta=-.17$, $p<.001$). This means that teachers who feel victimized lose their trust in faculty. Mobbing affects faculty trust on a medium level ($\beta=-.67$, $p<.001$). To sum up, mobbed teachers think that they are victimized by students and lose their trust in the faculty.

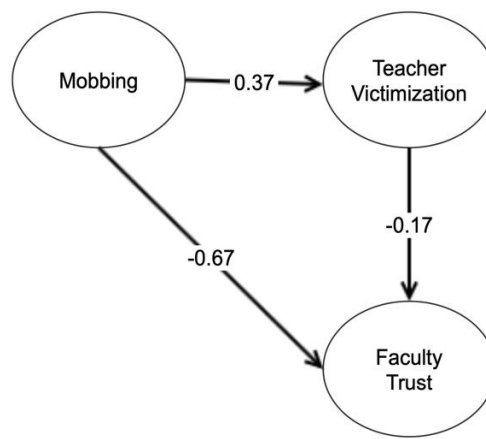


Figure 1. The Simplified Drawing of the Model

Discussion and Suggestions

This study aimed to reveal effects among teacher victimization, mobbing and faculty trust by constructing a structural equation model. The model proved that mobbing reduces faculty trust and induce teacher victimization. This result make sense with the relevant literature. Mobbing is a destructive phenomenon with devastating effects both on the victim and the organization (Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2012). The most important responsibilities to prevent mobbing lies on the shoulders of administrators, managers, and ones in charge. They need to be aware of the occurrence of mobbing; act fair, constructive while dealing with mobbing, create a safe working environment, reorganize the organizational structure and willing to educate the personnel in terms of the causes and results of it (Mercanlioglu, 2010).

This research adds to the relevant literature by indicating that mobbing causes teacher victimization and reduced trust in faculty. The causes and consequences of teacher victimization are not studied much (Espelage et al., 2013; McMahon et al., 2014; Wilson et al., 2011, Ozdere & Terzi, 2018). When it comes to teacher victimization, the negative effect of violence is not limited to the victim only because the safety of school administrators and teachers, who have important roles in students' psychological and academic development, and who are responsible for the safety and well-being of students, is a prerequisite for the effectiveness and efficiency of the education system. Therefore, teacher victimization seems to be a serious problem in terms of its results on individual, organizational and social levels and should not be ignored (APA, 2016; Sungu, 2015; Wilson et al., 2011; Ozdere & Terzi, 2018).

This research reveals the relation between teacher victimization and faculty trust that was never investigated. In the literature, there are several studies in which different dimensions of trust and faculty trust has been studied in terms of different variables (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999; Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001, Hoy, 2002). In some studies, organizational variables that affect trust in schools were examined and faculty trust was determined to affect job satisfaction and efficiency and effectiveness of schools (Maele & Houtte, 2009; Maele & Houtte, 2012; Farnsworth, Hallam, & Hilton, 2019). In some other studies, it was determined that faculty trust is an important variable in students' academic success (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001). It was pointed out that faculty trust affects teacher-student relations positively and supports students' academic success because it is an element that helps teachers develop their talents and become more effective (Howe, 2016). For this reason, it is emphasized that school administrators need to try to develop each dimension of trust among stakeholders for the effectiveness and efficiency of schools (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999). As a result, effective learning and teaching is a collaborative process, and trust is an essential element in this cooperation. Trust is an important tool that can be used to create environments that support effective cooperation to reach the goals of the school. A trust-based environment is important for more effective education and training. In this context, faculty are

considered important in terms of effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the pre-determined goals of the school.

A positive working environment that enhances collaboration and mutual respect among the personnel is a key factor for the success, effectiveness, and efficiency of an organization. However, the opposite -a negative working environment, the lack of respect- leads to lower performance and efficiency (Alparslan & Tunc, 2009; Cornoiu & Gyorgy, 2013). Mobbing which may stem from as a result of inefficient leadership or perpetrator or victim's certain characteristic has devastating effects not only on the person assaulted but also on the organization and society (Cornoiu & Gyorgy, 2013).

A school principal needs to develop a high trust environment at their schools (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Teachers trust the principal when they believe that she/he will protect their interests and good for their word (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). Also, a principal who is willing to build trust needs to be honest, friendly, helpful, accessible, consistent, facilitating, law-abiding as well as showing that he cares about teachers, communicates effectively, involves stakeholders in the decision-making process, supports taking initiative and risk, supports the professional development of teachers while paying the utmost attention to organizational justice (Bryk & Schneider, 2003; Brewster & Railsback, 2003). In the formation of a high trust environment, teachers also have responsibilities as much as the school principal (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998). It is important that they see their colleagues as honest, dependable and reliable professionals who can take initiative and autonomous decisions, show loyalty to their students, communicate and collaborate with others effectively for school effectiveness (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

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