

# Relationship between Organizational Mobbing and Silence Behavior among Teachers

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## Abstract

This study mainly aims to investigate the correlation between teachers' exposure to mobbing in their workplaces and their display of the act of silence. This study is based on a survey design where data from 312 teachers were collected and analyzed using correlation and regression analyses. Specifically, "The Structure and Dimensions of Workplace Violence Scale (SDWVS)" was used to measure the teachers' exposure to mobbing, and the "Workers Silence Behavior Scale (WSBS)" was used to determine the workers' level of silence. The findings of the research show that teachers are exposed to Mobbing Against Communication (MAC) and display the Silence Based on Self-Production and Fear (SBSF) behavior the most. There were significant correlations between all sub-dimensions of the mobbing scale and those of the silence scale. There is a significant, positive relationship between the behaviors of mobbing and silence. Teachers' silence behaviors may change depending on the type of mobbing. According to the study results, it is worth noting that " mobbing experiences can predict silence behavior.

**Keywords:** Organizational silence • Organizational mobbing • Teacher • Elementary education

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Workplace mobbing is a popular agenda both in media and everyday conversation. Moreover, the same is also true for the behavior of silence in response to this cruel treatment. Although mobbing and silence are apparently two independent concepts, they should, however, be considered together as they are both involved in creating an organizational culture. Determining the relationship between organizational mobbing and organizational silence is an important issue in terms of understanding the dynamics that generate and sustain organizational silence.

### The Reasons and Dimensions of Organizational Mobbing

The concept of mobbing was defined by Leymann (1996), as hostile and unethical applications of one or several people against another or others in a systematic manner (minimum once a week) for a long period (minimum six months), leading to a feeling of helplessness in the sufferer. Mobbing can be experienced in different ways in different organizations, such as top-down, horizontal, and bottom-up. However, top-down mobbing has a special attribute because of the damages that it leaves on the victims (Ertürk 2011; Vandekercho & Commers, 2003). Previous research suggests that mobbing from superiors toward their subordinates is the most common form, accounting for 57% of all mobbing situations reported in Europe and 87% of those reported in the United States (Ertürk, 2011).

Organizational, social, and personal reasons have been suggested to explain the mobbing in organizations (Davenport et al., 2003; Hoel & Salin, 2003; Leymann, 1996; Zapf, 1999). Organizational reasons include inadequacies in business organization, the changing nature of work, organizational culture and climate, inadequate leadership behaviors, victim's social status, and work stress. However, social reasons are associated with the culture of society in general. For example, in patriarchal societies like Turkey, the common belief is that a father is the authority in the family—he symbolizes the power and children should learn to obey. Therefore, being raised in such a society plays a decisive role (or has a significant impact/affect) on how individuals would judge mobbing behavior as they become exposed to it. One's personality traits and professional qualities are examples of personal perceptions of mobbing.

Mobbing in organizations is managed in five ways (Leyman, 1986 as cited in Davenport et al., 2003).

The first way is “preventing the possibilities of self-disclosure and communication” (e.g., preventing the victim from expressing himself, as well as scolding him). Second is “attacking against social contacts.” This includes acts like hindering one from communicating with others, isolating one from others, or disrespecting one's rights and personality. Third is “attacking the dignity.” This is done by attacking one's self-esteem, ridiculing one's political or religious beliefs, falsely gossiping against the victim, or calling the victim insulting nicknames. Fourth is “attacking the life and profession.” This includes preventing the success of the person, assigning senseless duties or duties under one's capacity, frequently changing one's job, or restricting one's duties. The last way is “directly attacking one's health.” It refers to harming the physical and/or mental health of the person. This type of mobbing includes violence against the person, or threatening one with violence, and physical harassment against the person.

### The Reasons and Dimensions of Organizational Silence

The Turkish Language Institution (TDK, 2013) defines *sound* as ethereal reaction that emerges in response to any behavior, attitude, emotion and thought, while it defines *silence* as the condition of absence of noise, quietness. As it can be understood, sound refers to an action while silence refers to a state. Thus, the word “sound” cannot be used as an antonym to “silence.” “To become silent,” which means to get into a quiet stance and state of being silent, refers to an action. In the present study, since silence is considered as an action rather than a state, it is used as the synonym for becoming silent.

In the literature on administration, organizational silence is defined as “workers' preference to refrain from expressing their thoughts, opinions, and concerns in the face of organizational problems” (Morrison & Miliken, 2000, p. 707). Employee silence, on the other hand, is defined as “the act of workers who are capable of affecting/adjusting change in the organization to refrain from making any behavioral and/or cognitive evaluations about the organizational issues” (Pinder & Harlos, 2001, p. 334). Pinder and Harlos (2001), who regard silence as a reaction against injustice, rather than a form of communication that affects others, consider silence as a dynamic process which can change according to individual factors and present conditions. They suggest that the behavior of silence can develop naturally among workers, as well as stem from the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of environmental conditions on workers, who

then display the behavior of silence consciously or unconsciously. From Pinder and Harlos's perspective, the act of silence can be interwoven with social-cultural-political reasons. For example, cultural codes as represented in the proverbs of "speech is silver, but silence is gold," "let sleeping dogs lie," "if you can't beat them, join them," feed the act of silence and get rooted in individuals' minds.

Different approaches are used to understand the act of silence. One of them is The Spirals of Silence Theory put forward by Neuville and Neuman (1974) to investigate the relationship between public and media. This theory suggests that when individuals adopt a point of view they first assess the tendencies in society. What urges an individual to such an assessment is the fear of being lonely or excluded, and this fear is effective in determining an individual's act of speech or silence. When individuals mostly agree with the same opinion they tend to disclose their views, but if their opinion represents the minority, they prefer to conceal their ideas (i.e., to keep silent). When used in organizational context (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Çakıcı, 2007), this theory implies that workers would choose to keep silent when they do not find support from their colleagues, and the choice of speech and silence in an organization mainly depends on the dominant opinion and the perceived support in the work group. Another theory about silence is Expectancy Theory and Planned Behavior Theory. According to this theory, if an individual is hopeful that an action will achieve the desired outcomes he will be willing to do that action, if not, he will choose not act. This means if the workers firmly believe that they can change the situation by speaking, they choose to speak, but if they do not believe they prefer to keep silent (Çakıcı, 2007). The act of silence is also explained within cost/benefit analysis. Individuals conduct a cost/benefit analysis by contrasting the benefits of speaking against the costs or consequences of it. The costs paid as a result of speaking can be direct ones such as loss of energy and time, as well as indirect ones including loss of dignity, promotion, being dismissed, or the possibility of reprisal from the opponents (Premeaux, 2001 as cited in Çakıcı, 2007).

The act of silence has four dimensions (Alparslan 2010; Dyne et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2003; Perlow & Repenning, 2007; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). The first dimension is silence based on indifference and acquiescence. The employee does not share any information, ideas or thoughts with others. This state of refrainment is a conscious attitude toward the institution. The second dimension

is silence based on self-protection and fear. The employee again refrains any information, idea or thought with others. This action, however, is due to fear rather than a conscious attitude. The third dimension, silence based on pro-social tendency, involves not exchanging ideas or thoughts about the job considering the goal of the organization and for the benefit of other workers. The last dimension is silence based on preserving relationships. In this dimension of silence, the workers actually want to express their thoughts about the solution of organizational problems, but they give up as they witness others who are unaccepting of this. This is a rather political stance and mainly reflects the worker's motivation to preserve his relationship with the decision-maker.

Pinder and Harlos (2001) discuss various reasons for silence including culture of injustice in organizations (mistreatment and unfair practices against workers), administrator control, suppression of conflicts, superiority of transactional relations over interpersonal relations, and prioritizing production through competitive atmosphere. The culture of injustice has two categories including structural relations and procedural relations. Structural relations involve uncertainty of hierarchical authority, centeredness, and low formalization. Procedural relations in contrast involve authoritarian forms of management, lack of communication, inadequacy of performance evaluation, and random decision making. Briefly, the organizational reasons of silence in an organization are explained with culture of injustice and organizational climate. Actually, undesired situations of any kind specified within culture of injustice and organizational climate should be interpreted as mobbing. Considering each of these dynamics as genuine practices of mobbing would make it easier to understand the relationship between organizational silence and mobbing which appear to be two independent concepts.

The review of the literature revealed a limited number of research papers on the topic of silence (Dyne et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Pinder & Harlos, 2001). Likewise, in Turkey only a few studies were found on silence. For example, Çakıcı (2008), Alparslan (2010), Bayram (2010), and Özgan and Külekçi (2012) and Tülübaş and Celep (2014), studied silence in higher education, while Kahveci (2010) investigated silence in primary schools. The common finding of these studies was the prevalence of the act of silence among workers in educational organizations.

Although there are many studies on mobbing in educational organizations, study lacks about the relationship between organizational mobbing and silence. Thus, the present study is believed to fill this gap in the literature.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the association between teachers' exposure to mobbing in their workplaces and their display of the act of silence. To achieve this goal the following research questions were asked:

1. To what extent do teachers get exposed to mobbing and display silence behavior?
2. Is there a significant association between teachers' exposure to mobbing and display of silence behavior?
3. Does teachers' exposure to mobbing significantly predict their display of silence behavior?

## Method

### Research Design

This qualitative study includes the relational descriptive model for aiming to identify the relationship between organizational silence and mobbing. The relational descriptive model focuses on explaining the existence and degree of relation between two or more variables (Karasar, 1986).

### Sample

The participants in the study were selected out of 1598 public school teachers from Istanbul province's Kadikoy district. There were 38 primary schools and 38 middle schools in the district. The teachers who actually participated in the study were those that were available on the day the study took place. The sample size able to represent the population within a 95% confidence interval was estimated to be 310 (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). However, considering the risk of defective or missing data, a total of 350 teachers were selected using simple random sampling method. From these 350 forms, 38 were discarded due to mistakes in completing them. After the defective forms were discarded, data from 312 teachers were considered in the study.

Out of 312 participating teachers, 184 were women (59.0%), and 128 were men (41.0%).

Their professional seniority were 1-5 years for 121 participants (38.8%), 6-10 years for 78 (25.0%), 11-15 years for 63 (20.1%), 16 years and more for 50 (16.0%). 171 (54.8%) of them were subject teachers, while 141 (45.2%) were elementary teachers.

### Data Collecting

The data collection instrument had two parts. In the first part, there were questions about participants' demographics including gender, subject, seniority, and period of service in the current school. In the second part, The Structure and Dimensions of Workplace Violence Scale (SDWVS) was used to measure the teachers' exposure to mobbing, and the Workers' Silence Behavior Scale (WSBS) was used to determine the workers' level of silence.

SDWVS, was originally developed by Aydın and Özkul (2007) to be used with workers of hotels. The scale was adapted by Kılıç Doğan (2009) for teachers and educational organizations. This five-point (Strongly Agree-5 to Strongly Disagree-1) Likert-type scale included 23 items. Higher scores from the scale indicate a higher level of exposure to mobbing. The scale was constructed into five subscales: Mobbing Against Communication (MAC-5 items), Mobbing Against Dignity (MAD -5 items), Mobbing Against Social Relationships (MASR-3 items), Mobbing Against Life (MAL-9 items), and Mobbing Directly Affecting Health (MDAH-2 items). The validity and reliability studies of the scale were done by Kılıç Doğan ,who reported factor loadings between .45 and .81; total variance explanation rate of 42%, and Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient of  $\alpha = .90$ . The reliability coefficients were estimated again using the data obtained in the present study, which revealed reliable results,  $\alpha = .72$  for MAC;  $\alpha = .88$  for MAD;  $\alpha = .70$  for MASR,  $\alpha = .88$  for MAL, and  $\alpha = .81$  for MDAH.

WSBS, was originally developed by Alparslan (2010), who administered it on faculty at universities. The five-point (Strongly Agree-5 to Strongly Disagree-1) Likert-type scale included 21 items. Higher scores from the scale indicate higher levels of silence behavior. The scale is composed of three subscales including Silence Based on Acquiescence (SBA-7 items), Silence Based on Self-protection and Fear (SBSF-8 items) and Silence Based on Preserving Relationships (SBPR-6 items). The factor loadings of the items were reported between .76-.86; and the rate of variance explanation by the subscales ranged between 22%-60%. Cronbach Alpha internal consistency

coefficients were  $\alpha = .86$  for SBA,  $\alpha = .89$  for SBSF, and  $\alpha = .87$  for SBPR. The reliability coefficients estimated in the present study were  $\alpha = .89$  for SBA;  $\alpha = .91$  for SBSF, and  $\alpha = .89$  for SBPR.

**Data Analysis**

For the analysis of the data, first the mean scores of the items in every subscale were calculated and then were presented over a five-point scale for each factor. The scores on the instrument were calculated as follows: 1.00-1.80 (absolutely disagree), 1.81-2.60 (disagree), 2.61-3.40 (neutral), 3.41 to 4.20 (agree), and 4.21 to 5.00 (strongly agree). Analyses were done using the factor mean scores. The association between variables was estimated using Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was used to analyze how much independent variables predict the dependent variables. The correlation coefficients were interpreted as high (.70–1.00), moderate (.69–0.30), and low (.29–.00) (Büyüköztürk, 2002). In interpreting the results of regression analysis, standardized Beta ( $\beta$ ) coefficients and the  $t$ -test results regarding their significance were considered. The significance level was considered  $p < .05$  in the analyses.

**Findings**

**Correlations Between Organizational Mobbing and Silence**

The descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and correlation coefficients for dependent (organizational silence) and independent (organizational mobbing) variables are presented in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, the highest scores in terms of exposure to mobbing belong to MAC ( $\bar{X} = 1.99$ ) subscale, while MDAH ( $\bar{X} = 1.75$ ) had the lowest scores. Participating teachers' level of displaying SBPR

( $\bar{X} = 2.29$ ) behavior is higher than displaying SBSF ( $M=2.02$ ) and SBA ( $\bar{X} = 1.86$ ) behaviors. The analysis of the correlation coefficients reveal that the MAC, MAD, MASR, MAL and MDAH factors of SDWVS are interrelated. The coefficients ranging between .54 and .84 indicate “moderate” to “high” levels of positive correlations. These correlations were found significant at  $p < .01$  level. Significant correlations were also found between SBA, SBSF and SBPR subscales of the WSBS. Estimated coefficients between .57 and .74 also indicate “moderate” to “high” levels of positive correlations, significant at  $p < .01$  level.

When inter-correlations between the subscales of SDWVS and WSBS were analyzed (see Table 1), MAC score were observed to have a “moderate” level of positive and significant correlations with SBA ( $r = .65, p < .01$ ), SBSF ( $r = .60, p < .01$ ) and SBPR ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ). Likewise, MAD scores were found to have a “moderate” level of positive and significant correlations with SBA ( $r = .65, p < .01$ ); SBSF ( $r = .60, p < .01$ ) and SBPR ( $r = .49, p < .01$ ). MASR scores were also moderately and positively correlated with SBA ( $r = .65, p < .01$ ); SBSF ( $r = .55, p < .01$ ) and SBPR ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ) scores. Similarly there were moderate level of positive and significant correlations between MAL scores and SBA ( $r = .64, p < .01$ ); SBSF ( $r = .61, p < .01$ ) and SBPR ( $r = .47, p < .01$ ) scores. Lastly, MDAH scores were moderately, positively and significantly correlated with SBA ( $r = .50, p < .01$ ) and SBSF ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ), while its correlation with SBPR ( $r = .29, p < .01$ ) was significant, positive but at a level considered to be low.

**Prediction of Silence Based on Acquiescence**

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis for the prediction of silence based on acquiescence are given in Table 2.

Table 1  
Means, Standard Deviations and Correlation Coefficients for the Variables

Variables	Mean	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.MAC	1.99	.77	1							
2.MAD	1.77	.70	.80*	1						
3.MASR	1.80	.73	.71*	.79*	1					
4.MAL	1.91	.74	.81*	.84*	.74*	1				
5.MDAH	1.75	.71	.55*	.63*	.54*	.59*	1			
6.SBA	1.86	.86	.65*	.65*	.65*	.64*	.50*	1		
7.SBSF	2.02	.85	.60*	.60*	.55*	.61*	.39*	.74*	1	
8.SBPR	2.29	.96	.47*	.49*	.44*	.47*	.29*	.57*	.74*	1

\*  $p < .01$ .

**Table 2**  
*The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Silence Based on Acquiescence*

Variable	B	SD	$\beta$	t	p	Partial r	Part r
Constant	.26	.09		2.79	.00		
MAC	.27	.08	.25	3.42	.00	.192	.136
MAD	.04	.09	.04	.50	.61	.029	.020
MASR	.29	.07	.28	4.21	.00	.234	.167
MAL	.13	.09	.12	1.41	.15	.080	.056
MDAH	.09	.04	.11	2.13	.03	.121	.085

F = 65.63; p < .01.  
R = .71; R<sup>2</sup> = .51.

The results of the regression analysis indicate significant correlations between teachers' scores from the subscales of SDWVS and SBA scores (F = 65.63; p < .00). This suggest that teachers' exposure to mobbing is associated with their display of SBA behavior (R = .71, p < .00). Teachers' exposure to organizational mobbing accounts for approximately 51% of the total variance in teachers SBA scores. The Beta values suggest that the order of relative importance of different types of mobbing is MASR, MAC, MAL, MDAH, and MAD. The t-test results regarding the significance of regression coefficients indicate that MAC ( $\beta = .25, p < .05$ ), MASR ( $\beta = .28, p < .05$ ), MAL ( $\beta = .12, p < .05$ ) and MDAH ( $\beta = .11, p < .05$ ) positively and significantly predict the SBA type of silence. However, when the part-and-partial correlations were examined, a significantly low and positive relationship of the SBA with these variables was seen. When the  $\beta$ -coefficient values were examined, it was seen that with a one-unit increase in MAC, a .27 increase resulted in the SBA; this same increase in MASR resulted in a .29 increase; in MAL, a .13 increase; and in MDAH, there was a .09 increase with the constant value of SBA. On the contrary, MAD ( $\beta = .04, p < .05$ ) was found to be an insignificant predictor of SBA behavior. When the part-and-partial correlations were examined, a one-unit increase in MAD resulted in a .04 increase in SBA, and this result was not significant.

**Prediction of Silence Based on Self-Protection and Fear**

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis for the prediction of silence based on self-protection and fear are given in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
*The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Silence Based on Self-protection and Fear*

Variable	B	SD	$\beta$	t	p	Partial r	Part r
Constant	.43	.11		3.75	.00		
MAC	.28	.09	.23	2.86	.00	.162	.124
MAD	.19	.11	.16	1.67	.09	.095	.072
MASR	.11	.08	.10	1.39	.16	.079	.060
MAL	.28	.11	.23	2.51	.01	.142	.109
MDAH	-.03	.05	-.03	-.62	.53	-.036	-.027

F = 45.89; p < .01.  
R = .65; R<sup>2</sup> = .42.

The results of the regression analysis indicate significant correlations between teachers' mobbing scores and SBSF scores (F = 45.89; p < .00). This implies that teachers' exposure to mobbing is associated with their display of SBSF behavior (R = .65, p < .00). Teachers' exposure to organizational mobbing accounts for approximately 43% of the total variance in teachers SBSF scores. The Beta values suggest that in terms of predictive, power both MAC and MAL are relatively more important in predicting silence, followed by MAD and MASR. The t-test results regarding the significance of regression coefficients indicate that MAC ( $\beta = .23, p < .05$ ) and MAL ( $\beta = .23, p < .05$ ) are positive and significant predictors of SBSF type of silence, there were no significant relationships between SBSF with MAD, MASR, or MDAH. When we look at the part and partial correlations, we find a positive correlation between SBSF with MAC and MAL. When  $\beta$ -coefficient values were examined, it is seen that a one-unit increase in both MAC and MAL resulted in a .28 increase in SBPR.

**Prediction of Silence Based on Preserving Relationships**

The results of the multiple linear regression analysis for the prediction of silence based on preserving relationships are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
*The Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for the Prediction of Silence Based on Preserving Relationships*

Variable	B	SD	$\beta$	t	P	Partial r	Part r
Constant	.92	.14		6.31	.00		
MAC	.23	.12	.17	1.86	.06	.106	.091
MAD	.34	.14	.26	2.40	.01	.136	.117
MASR	.09	.10	.07	.863	.38	.049	.042
MAL	.12	.14	.09	.881	.37	.050	.043
MDAH	-.07	.07	-.06	-1.00	.31	-.057	-.049

F = 22.80; p < .01.  
R = .52; R<sup>2</sup> = .27.

Table 4 indicates significant correlations between teachers' mobbing scores and SBPR scores ( $F = 22.80; p < .00$ ). This suggests teachers' exposure to mobbing is associated with their display of SBPR ( $R = .52, p < .00$ ). Teachers' exposure to organizational mobbing accounts for approximately 27% of the total variance in teachers SBPR scores. The Beta values suggest that the order of relative importance of different types of mobbing is MAD, MAC, MAL, MASR, and MDAH. The t-test results regarding the significance of regression coefficients indicate that only MAD ( $\beta = .26, p < .05$ ) is a positive and significant predictor of SBPR type of silence, while other types of mobbing were insignificant predictors of SBPR scores. This is understood when we look at the part-and-partial correlations. According to the results from the correlations, there is a positive correlation between SBPR and MAC, SBPR and MASR, as well as SBPR and MAL; but there is a negative correlation between SBPR and MDAH. In addition, when  $\beta$ -coefficient values are examined, it can be seen that a one-unit increase in MAD resulted in a .34 increase in SBPR.

### Discussion and Conclusion

This study mainly investigated the correlation between teachers' level of exposure to mobbing in their schools and their display of organizational silence behavior. According to the results, one may conclude that exposure to mobbing behaviors may be considered important predictors of silence behavior. The findings of the research show that teachers are exposed to MAC most frequently and MDAH least. This is consistent with the findings by Çomak (2011), who reported that exposure to mobbing against self-disclosure and communication was more common than any other type of mobbing. Considering that mobbing against self-disclosure and communication includes preventing someone from expressing oneself or yelling at or scolding him/her, the findings are also consistent with those by Sağlam (2008), who found that being interrupted while speaking, and being shouted at or scolded are the most frequent types of mobbing teachers were exposed to.

The participating teachers stated that they display SBPR behavior more than SBSF and SBA. This finding is consistent with the findings in Alparslan (2010), who observed that the faculty tends to display silence on the basis of preserving relationships more than the other types of silence behavior. This tendency can be associated with the tendency to follow the majority as specified in the Spiral of Silence Theory. This theory

suggests that one would prefer to speak when he/she is supported by the majority instead of keeping silent (Neuelle-Neuman, 1974). Getting the support of the majority depends on maintaining positive relationships with others. In fact, the general disagreement of participating teachers regarding the items in the silence scale can be attributed to teachers' preference to speak instead of keeping silent as well as to the importance given to the act of silence on the basis of preserving relationships, considering the propositions of the theory. Likewise, Alparslan (2010) concluded that the faculty did not perceive a climate of silence in their organizations and display silence behavior. In contrast, Çakıcı (2008) found significant differences between the fear of harming relations and the act of silence according to the title of the teaching staff (professors and others). Similarly, Bayram (2010) and Tülübaş and Celep (2014) also found that the act of silence is experienced differently according to the title of the faculty. The lack of any difference in terms of academic titles among the participating teachers and the prevalence of silence based on preserving relationships tendency over other types of silence can again be explained with the inclination to act with the majority.

The results of the research show that subscales of SDWVS were positively and significantly intercorrelated at moderate to high levels. The same is also true for the subscales of WSBS, in which significant correlations were found between the subscales of SDWVS and WSBS. These positive and significant correlations were at the low level only for MDAH and SBPR and at a moderate level for all other comparisons. The low level of correlation between MDAH and SBPR is because teachers prefer to protect their health rather than relationships when their health is at risk. The significant positive and moderate levels of correlations between exposure to mobbing and silence behavior can imply that as teachers get exposed to mobbing, they display silence behavior to some extent. Similarly, Daşçı, (2014) found a relationship between the leadership styles of school administrators and teacher behaviors of mobbing and silence. Additionally, Gül and Özcan (2011) found moderate levels of positive and significant correlations between exposure to mobbing and the act of keeping silent. However, as mobbing increases it is ideally expected to have low levels of silence. At this point, considering the processes of development and maintenance of organizational silence, the reasons for the act of silence can be explained. This process is explained as "organization climate" by Morrison and Miliken (2000) and as "culture of injustice" by Pinder and

Harlos (2001). If the organization climate affects workers in the form of concerns such as the risk of being dismissed, considering it dangerous to speak, failure to get a promotion, and administrators' negative attitudes, these negative effects can lead workers to silence. Likewise, considering the culture of injustice, if mistreatment toward workers, superiority of transactional relations over interpersonal relations, uncertainty of hierarchical authority, and administrator control are established as ordinary practices in the organization, then the workers would keep on being silent. In fact, there are research findings indicating that silence is significantly associated with organizational climate and superiors' behaviors (Panahi et al., 2012; Wang & Hsieh, 2013). It is possible to surmise that the culture of injustice is common around the world in general and, particularly in Turkey, and that the organizations are commonly perceived as negative. In fact, the culture of injustice and organization climate emerges in relation with the policies that characterize the operation of the organization. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) statistics (2009, p. 40) the rate of workplace accidents around the world during 2008–2009 was 52.9%. According to the Turkish Social Security Institution's (SSI) annual statistics, 69,227 worker injured due to work accidents and 697 occupational diseases were reported in 2011 (SGK, 2011). While 1,700 of the world accidents resulted in death, ten workers were reported to have died of occupational diseases. However, there are no statistics regarding workers who had lost their jobs or were investigated or punished. This culture of injustice and organization climate should be regarded as a means of mobbing as well. Extensive research conducted by the state authorities proved that in Turkey public workers are exposed to mobbing the most (TBMM, 2011). Therefore, such established and spreading injustices and negative aspects of organizational climate (or in other words such situations that involve mobbing) play an important role in the creation and maintenance of organizational silence in both state and private sectors.

Present research also found that teachers' SBA behavior is significantly and positively predicted by MAC, MASR, MAL and MDAH, while MAD was positive but insignificant predictors of SBA. Thus, it can be concluded that such practices of mobbing included in MAC, MASR, and MDAH subscales, such as preventing individuals from expressing themselves, scolding and yelling, preventing contact with others, as well as attacks and threats against physical and mental well-being can lead teachers to consciously display SBA behaviors which include refraining from expressing one's thoughts and ideas.

While teachers' act of SBSF was significantly predicted by exposure to MAC and MAL, exposure to MAD, MAL, and MDAH was found to be an insignificant predictor of SBSF. Such practices of mobbing defined under MAC and MAL as frequently changing one's job, assigning duties under one's capacity, preventing self-expression with the fear of workload, or prevention of contact with others can significantly lead teachers to display SBSF behaviors which include concealing one's thoughts or ideas out of fear.

The SBPR behavior of teachers is significantly predicted only by exposure to MAD. This implies that humiliating someone, ridiculing his/her political, religious beliefs, or falsely gossiping about him/her as specified under the MAD dimension can significantly lead teachers to display acts of silence based on an effort to preserve relationships.

Even though the findings of this study support the proposition that exposure to mobbing is a significant factor in predicting organizational silence. It would be a more appropriate approach to handle the organizations within their social, political and cultural milieus (i.e. within the context of their relationships with their environment), instead of considering organizational mobbing and silence as independent processes purely confined within the organization. Therefore, the source, essence, and foundations of mobbing and silence among teachers should be explored by future research.

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