

Art. #1990, 12 pages, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v42n1a1990>

The relationship between mobbing, alienation and burnout among teachers in Mersin, Turkey

Yusuf İnandı 

Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Mersin University, Mersin, Turkey

Ayşe Sezin Büyükoçkan 

Biskek Turkish School, Kyrgyzstan
sezinbuyukozkan@hotmail.com

The relationship between mobbing behaviour, alienation and burnout experienced by teachers in the elementary schools in central districts of Mersin was investigated in the study reported on here. The sample of this study consisted of a group of 455 randomly selected teachers selected by the simple random sampling method. The mobbing scale, alienation scale and Maslach Burnout Inventory were used in the study, and data were analysed by using the correlation and regression techniques. As a result, there is a positive and significant relationship between mobbing behaviour experienced by the teachers and their alienation. Also, mobbing behaviour of school administrators were found to be positively associated with teachers' burnout. Furthermore, mobbing behaviour significantly predict all other dimensions of alienation, except for school alienation dimension, and all dimensions of burnout.

Keywords: alienation; burnout; exhaustion; leadership behaviour; mobbing; school administrators; teachers

Introduction

Today, many people spend more time in the workplace than at home. Therefore, factors such as social interaction in the work environment, being in solidarity with colleagues, workload and communication with the manager have more effects on the production process and efficiency than in the past (Leonard, 2018). Today, in business life, it is aimed to reach the goals as quickly and as economically as possible and maximum efficiency is required from the employee. Employees' problems negatively affect not only themselves but also their colleagues, efficiency and thus the workplace in economic terms. For this reason, more emphasis has recently been placed on measures to increase employee motivation and eliminate negatives. One of the negatives influencing employees in the workplace and decreasing their efficiency is expressed as "mobbing." Mobbing, in turn, is supposed to have a number of negative effects on the employees such as burnout (Okçu & Çetin, 2017) and alienation to the workplace (Demirel, Ökten & Kunday, 2012). It is thought that mobbing behaviour faced by teachers predicts their alienation and burnout. Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the relationship and level thereof between mobbing, alienation and burnout.

Significance of the Study

This study is considered important in that it reveals the consequences of mobbing behaviour of school administrators. Their mobbing behaviour might end in teachers' alienation from the school and burnout, which will negatively influence not only the teachers but also the school and the students. Therefore, this study is of significance to contribute in determining the reasons for alienation and burnout of teachers and making suggestions for preventing this negative situation.

Literature Review

Mobbing

Leymann (1996), describing mobbing in the 1980s as long-running hostile behaviour in the workplace for the worker, states that, in order to be regarded as such, mobbing behaviour should take place at least once a week and should also continue for 6 months or more. Leymann (1996) emphasises that this kind of unethical behaviour by one or more people aims to push the victim into an unsupported and vulnerable position. The employee exposed to mobbing feels reluctant to work and tries to withdraw from the work environment as much as possible. This process may well end in the employee suffering from physical and psychological disturbances, and eventually leave employment. Shallcross, Sheehan and Ramsay (2007) point out that the purpose of mobbing is to destroy, humiliate, or control the victimised employee and to force him/her to resign.

The fact that mobbing behaviour can be confused with behaviour triggered by the competitive environment at the workplace also results in the difficulty of identifying mobbing. Using the Psychological Terrorist Inventory, Leymann (1996) groups such behaviour as verbal attacks, rumours and humiliating deeds, and indicates that mobbing can have verbal and physical aspects.

Research on mobbing distinguishes three types of mobbing: bottom-up, horizontal and top-down; bottom-up takes place from the employee to the manager, horizontal is among employees, and top-down is from the manager to the employees. No matter the direction of mobbing, it is difficult to identify the qualities of the

victims (Daniel, 2006). Çobanoğlu (2005) states that being from the opposite gender, being a member of a different race or ethnic group, dressing in a different style or even being in different age groups may sometimes be the cause of victimisation. Similarly, Gül (2009) states that those who are exposed to mobbing don't necessarily have distinguishing characteristics, but often have high ideals, are hard-working and honest people, and are thus confronted with such obstruction. He also points out that, due to the organisational structure, the process is allowed to continue unabated as victims do not receive support from colleagues for fear of loss of work. De Wet (2014) indicates that threatening behaviour seems to be a common bullying tactic. Although the individual continues to work, he or she is unable to perform fully and cannot fully dedicate himself or herself to the work. Davenport (2011) explains this with reference to the decline in productivity and efficiency of the employee and an increase in cost – directly and indirectly. As the individual who suffers mobbing can experience psychological and even physical discomfort, his or her work quality declines, which means a loss to the organisation. Since the individual is not fully dedicated to the organisation, it seems inevitable that victims, over time, alienate from work and self.

Alienation

In the modern society many people spend their lives between home and work and live a mechanised life. They are unable to spare time for their own pleasures, interests or even for the people they love. Therefore, people can become removed from what they want to do, their feelings and the lives they dream of. All these problems bring the concept of alienation to mind. When an individual experiences such problems regarding the work environment, one can talk about alienation from work (Tummers, Bekkers, Van Thiel & Steijn, 2015). Karl Marx, who took up this issue years ago, expresses this concept as an alienation of the individual to the output of his labour, to the work process, to his colleagues, and ultimately to himself. Today, many employees keep their distance from their jobs and cannot fully reflect themselves at work. In this context, Cheung (2008) describes alienation as a work condition that prevents an employee from his or her production enjoyment, business process, social interaction, and accomplishment of skills. In the literature alienation is mostly examined in five dimensions (Demirel et al., 2012): powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation and self-alienation.

Powerlessness refers to the employee's lack of control or autonomy on outputs. The individual feels ineffective and weak. The employee, feeling that he/she cannot change anything starts

questioning the meaning of his/her work over time, and by thinking that he/she has contributed little to the production process, he/she cannot understand his/her place in the bigger scheme of things, and thus starts believing that work is meaningless.

The conflict between own truths and procedures reveals the dimension of normlessness. Yılmaz and Sarpkaya (2009) explain this as the non-functionality of the individual's value judgments or the individual's inability to exhibit such judgments. The connection between the employee and the society gets weaker over time and the individual begins to think that he/she has been alienated from society. In this dimension, namely isolation, the person withdraws as much as possible. A person may withdraw from self and the immediate environment and may show compulsive behaviour, namely self-alienation. According to Seeman (1959), in this dimension, the person only performs actions for reward or for others. Zengin and Kaygın (2016) state that employees who feel alienated from work cannot internalise the organisational activities since they do not have physical and mental freedom and thus believe that they do not contribute enough to the organisation.

The fact that the individual works without believing in the meaningfulness of his/her work or contribution to the organisation may result in unhappiness, poor performance and emotionality. All these can be early signs of burnout experienced by an employee.

Burnout

Individuals can achieve success and spiritual satisfaction in the work they willingly do. However, sometimes due to the managers, procedures of the organisation or any other reasons, the employees may start disliking their jobs and continue their work life only because they have to, which literature refers to as burnout. While Freudenberger labels an employee's mental tiredness as burnout, Maslach, Schaufeli and Leiter (2001) describe burnout as a long-term response to stressors at work stating that, beyond their individual stress response, burnout affects employees' relationships at work, emotions, motivators, and values. According to Pines (1993), if individuals do not feel important and valuable in their organisations, it can lead them to being unhappy and thus experience a sense of burnout. Burnout is often experienced in the occupations such as the health or education sectors in which one deals with people directly.

The conditions at work highly influence employees. A moderate climate in the work environment and relations with managers and colleagues can draw in or alienate individuals. It is especially difficult for educators who work with large group of learners. The teachers are no longer able to giving personal attention to individual

learners and eventually develop an impersonal and aloof attitude (Pienaar & Van Wyk, 2006). Maslach et al. (2001) point out that a person's work environment and the interpersonal relationships in the workplace are of great importance. Boshoff, Potgieter, Ellis, Mentz and Malan (2018) point out that generally poor circumstances regarding the teaching situation, including workload, inadequate resources, poor colleague relationships, together with learner-related stressors, such as learner misbehaviour, are factors of stress. The negative climate in the workplace causes, among others, physical and emotional tiredness, lack of work commitment, alienation from work and hyperirritability (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993; Friedman & Farber, 1992; Talmor, Reiter & Feigin, 2005). The literature shows that burnout takes place in three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and personal accomplishment.

Maslach et al. (2001) emphasise the emotional and physical deprivation of the individual while explaining emotional exhaustion. Developing negative emotions about work and a lack of energy can be seen as a sign of emotional exhaustion. If the situation escalates, the person becomes insensitive to his/her environment. In this context, the depersonalisation dimension is a response to emotional exhaustion (Maslach et al., 2001). Due to being effected negatively, the employee cannot be expected to work efficiently and thus, his/her accomplishment decreases. In short, a person who experiences emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation is inevitably likely to have less personal accomplishment, which results in overall burnout of the individual.

The relationship between mobbing, alienation and burnout

For all organisations it is of great importance for all employees to have a high level of motivation and job satisfaction and to be committed to their work and going to work with enthusiasm (İnandı & Tunç, 2012). Because these all affect workers, they also play a role in the quality of work. As employees nowadays spend much longer hours at the workplace than in the past, it is even more important.

When confronted with mobbing behaviour, employees may become alienated from their work environment. Demirel et al. (2012) state that, in case of such organisational psychological violence, the employee is first alienated from himself/herself, then from his/his environment and work. The employee who suffers from alienation cannot fully commit to his/her work and thus cannot deliver the desired efficiency. Avcı and Kaya (2013) emphasise that mobbing behaviour does not only happen in the workplace. An employee who does not enjoy his/her work becomes useless to self and the organisation. Throughout this process, the

psychological and physiological negativities experienced by the person may result in him/her becoming emotionlessly toward others and less productive at work. Burnout results in employees completely withdrawing from their jobs.

Durusu and Cemaloğlu (2019) indicate that the most common mobbing behaviour that teachers are exposed to is gossiping and spreading rumours about him/her, one's opinions being ignored and hiding information that can influence their success. The negativity of mobbing does not only affect the employee but the whole organisation. The psychological effects of mobbing behaviour, which may result in resignations of employees, may lead to the loss of trained personnel and a decrease in organisational commitment and motivation.

Kahveci and Demirtaş (2014) argue that the lack of cooperation and communication among employees in organisations bring alienation. Teachers who withdraw from their environment, colleagues and work, simply go to work because they have to and may thus experience alienation. Over time, increasing alienation in the workplace may lead to burnout.

Purpose of the Study

Guided by the following research questions, the main purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which mobbing behaviour and alienation experienced by teachers at public elementary schools predicted their alienation and burnout.

- Does the mobbing behaviour faced by teachers predict their alienation? If so, at what level does it happen?
- Does the mobbing behaviours faced by teachers predict their burnout? If so, at what level does it happen?

Method

Research Model

The relational survey model was used in this study since we aimed to show the relationship between mobbing, alienation from school, and burnout experienced by the teachers. In the relational survey model, comparison and relationship between the variables is examined (Gliner, Morgan & Leech, 2015) and, as opinions of people about an issue should be taken directly from themselves, the relational survey was the preferred model (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2015).

Population and Sample

The study's population comprised of 7,233 teachers working in 252 public primary and secondary schools in the central districts (Akdeniz, Toroslar, Yenişehir and Mezitli) of Mersin, Turkey, during the 2016–2017 academic year (Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education, 2017). A sample of 437 teachers were selected by non-proportional sampling from the population (Table 1). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009:219),

calculation of sample size for the universe with a certain number of members, the sample of this study is at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error and a sufficient number of samples is considered to have been reached. The teacher participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that their personal information would be kept confidential.

Table 1 Distribution of teachers by gender

	Number of teachers	Percentage
Female	223	51%
Male	214	49%
Total	437	100%

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected through three different scales and a personal information form. The first scale was the negative acts questionnaire (mobbing), the second the alienation scale, and the last was the burnout scale.

Negative Acts Questionnaire (NAQ)

The negative act questionnaire was translated into Turkish by Cemaloglu (2007). In the first section the participants were required to enter their personal information and the second section contained 19 items about negative acts. From the factor analysis performed by us, 19 items were found to group under three factors with a total variance of 57.34. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the items was .92 and their factor load ranged between .37 and .67. The first dimension, negative communication, had 12 items, the second dimension, task, four items and the third dimension, workload, had three items. In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .87 for the overall questionnaire while it was found to be .80 for negative communication, .73 for task, and .72 for workload.

Alienation scale

The alienation scale was developed by Elma (2003). From the factor analysis that we performed, the 38 items were found to group under four factors with a total variance of 42.4. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as .86 for weakness (10

items), .84 for meaninglessness (11 items), .80 for isolation (10 items) and .62 for alienation from school (seven items). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .89 for weakness, .84 for meaninglessness, .80 for isolation, and .83 alienation from school.

Burnout inventory

The burnout inventory was developed by Maslach and Jackson, and adapted to Turkish by Ergin (1993). During the adaptation process, the results of the construct validity showed consistency with the original version of the inventory, revealing the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and decrease in personal success. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was calculated as .83 for emotional exhaustion (nine items), .65 for depersonalisation (five items), and .72 for personal accomplishment (eight items). The high scores for the emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation dimensions, and the low scores for the personal success dimension indicate high levels of burnout. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was found to be .83 for emotional exhaustion, .72 for depersonalisation, and .88 for personal accomplishment.

Analysis of Data

The relationship between the mobbing that the teachers were exposed to and their alienation and burnout levels was determined by correlation analysis. Whether the mobbing experienced by the teachers predicted their alienation and burnout levels was determined using the multiple regression analysis. Before the multiple regression analysis, assumptions of regression were tested. A normality test was performed and the data showed a normal distribution (skewness-kurtosis/standard error = +/-3). In addition, no collinearity was found between sub-dimensions of mobbing, which was the independent variable of the study. Furthermore, no outliers were found in the data sets. Significance levels of 0.05 and 0.01 were used in the study.

Results

The findings on the relationship of the mobbing behaviour experienced by the teachers and their burnout and alienation are presented in this section.

Table 2 Correlation analysis of the relationship between the mobbing and alienation experienced by the teachers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
Negative communication (com.)	1							1.275	.306
Task	.607**	1						1.217	.351
Workload	.563**	.663**	1					1.269	.414
Powerlessness	.340**	.359**	.373**	1				1.905	.683
Meaninglessness	.345**	.306**	.307**	.729**	1			1.528	.568
Isolation	.378**	.246**	.284**	.624**	.582**	1		1.682	.611
School alienation	.025**	-.005	-.017	-.101*	.016	-.169**	1	3.011	.940

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

According to Table 2, the negative communication sub-dimension of the mobbing behaviour that the teachers were exposed to had a significant and positive relationship with the powerlessness ($r = .340, p < .01$), meaninglessness ($r = .345, p < .01$), isolation ($r = .378, p < .01$) and school alienation ($r = .025, p < .01$) sub-dimensions of alienation.

The task sub-dimension of the mobbing also had a significant and positive relationship with the powerlessness ($r = .359, p < .01$), meaninglessness ($r = .306, p < .01$) and isolation ($r = .246, p < .01$) sub-dimensions of alienation while there was no

significant relationship between task and school alienation ($r = -.005, p > .05$).

The workload, another sub-dimension of mobbing, had a significant and positive relationship with the powerlessness ($r = .373, p < .01$), meaninglessness ($r = .307, p < .01$) and isolation ($r = .284, p < .01$) sub-dimensions of alienation while it had no significant relationship with school alienation ($r = -.017, p > .05$).

Table 3 shows the results of the multiple regression analysis of the effects of mobbing behaviour experienced by teachers on their alienation levels. Each of these effects is indicated.

Table 3 Multiple regression analysis of mobbing behaviour predicting teachers' alienation

Alienation Variable	Powerlessness					Meaninglessness					Isolation					School alienation				
	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	.753	.130	-	5.790	.000	.614	.110	-	5.561	.000	.689	.118	-	5.830	.000	2.949	.190	-	14.971	.000
Negative com. Task	.316	.125	.142	2.535	.012	.409	.106	.220	3.865	.000	.659	.113	.330	5.827	.000	.170	.189	.055	.900	.369
Workload	.271	.120	.140	2.260	.024	.148	.102	.092	1.456	.146	-.060	.109	-.034	-.549	.583	-.031	.182	-.012	-.171	.864
	.330	.098	.201	3.376	.001	.167	.083	.122	2.011	.045	.178	.089	.121	2.007	.045	-.092	.148	-.040	-.619	.536
	<i>R</i> = .416		<i>R</i> ² = .173			<i>R</i> = .376		<i>R</i> ² = .141			<i>R</i> = .388		<i>R</i> ² = .151			<i>R</i> = .046		<i>R</i> ² = .002		
	<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 31.462					<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 24.745					<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 26.668					<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = .324				
	<i>p</i> < .000					<i>p</i> < .000					<i>p</i> < .000					<i>p</i> > .05				

Note. *p* < .05.

Powerlessness

The mobbing behaviour indicated by the teachers in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' powerlessness scores on the alienation scale ($R = .416$, $R^2 = .173$, $p < .000$). The variables mentioned in Table 3 account for 17% of the total variance in powerlessness.

Meaninglessness

The mobbing behaviour mentioned in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' meaninglessness scores on the alienation scale ($R = .376$, $R^2 = .141$, $p < .000$). The variables given in Table 3 account for 14% of the total variance in meaninglessness.

Isolation

The mobbing behaviour indicated in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale also show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' isolation scores on the alienation scale ($R = .388$, $R^2 = .151$, $p < .000$). The variables shown in Table 3 account for 15% of the total variance in isolation.

School Alienation

The mobbing behaviour mentioned in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale did not have a significant relationship with the teachers' school alienation scores on the alienation scale ($R = .046$, $R^2 = .002$, $p > .05$). The variables given in Table 3 account for very little of the total variance in school alienation.

Table 4 Correlation analysis on the relationship between the mobbing experienced by the teachers and their burnout

	1	2	3	4	5	6	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Negative com.	1						1.275	.306
Task	.607**	1					1.217	.351
Workload	.563**	.663**	1				1.269	.414
Emotional exhaustion	.256**	.219**	.263**	1			1.900	.634
Depersonalisation	.363**	.201**	.210**	.547**	1		1.409	.512
Personal accomplishment	.152**	.043	.071	.054	.131**	1	2.403	.925

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

According to Table 4, the negative communication sub-dimension of the mobbing that teachers were exposed to had a significant and positive relationship with the emotional exhaustion ($r = .256$, $p < .01$), depersonalisation ($r = .363$, $p < .01$) and personal accomplishment ($r = .152$, $p < .01$) sub-dimensions of burnout.

The task sub-dimension of mobbing had a significant and positive relationship with the emotional exhaustion ($r = .219$, $p < .01$) and depersonalisation ($r = .201$, $p < .01$) sub-

dimensions of burnout while there was no significant relationship between task and personal accomplishment ($r = .043$, $p > .05$).

The workload, another sub-dimension of mobbing, had a significant and positive relationship with the emotional exhaustion ($r = .263$, $p < .01$) and depersonalisation ($r = .210$, $p < .01$) sub-dimensions of burnout, however, it had no significant relationship with personal accomplishment ($r = .071$, $p > .05$).

Table 5 Multiple regression analysis of the mobbing behaviour predicting teachers' burnout

Burnout Variable	Emotional exhaustion					Depersonalisation					Personal accomplishment				
	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	B	SE	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.138	.127	-	8.953	.000	.646	.100	-	6.453	.000	1.189	.191	-	9.814	.000
Negative com.	.315	.122	.152	2.584	.010	.627	.096	.375	6.539	.000	.589	.183	.195	3.212	.001
Task	.029	.117	.016	.248	.804	-.068	.092	-.047	-.737	.461	-.235	.176	-.089	-1.335	.183
Workload	.256	.096	.167	2.676	.008	.037	.075	.030	.488	.626	.047	.144	.021	.325	.745
	<i>R</i> = .294		<i>R</i> ² = .086			<i>R</i> = .365		<i>R</i> ² = .133			<i>R</i> = .166		<i>R</i> ² = .027		
	<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 14.225					<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 23.051					<i>F</i> ₍₃₋₄₅₁₎ = 4.234				
	<i>p</i> < .000					<i>p</i> < .000					<i>p</i> < .006				

Note. *p* < .05.

The results of the multiple regression analysis on the effects of mobbing behaviour experienced by teachers on their burnout levels are presented in Table 5. Each of these effects is given below.

Emotional Exhaustion

The mobbing behaviour indicated in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' emotional exhaustion scores on the burnout scale ($R = .294$, $R^2 = .086$, $p < .000$). The variables stated in Table 5 account for 9% of the total variance in emotional exhaustion.

Depersonalisation

The mobbing behaviour indicated by the teachers in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' depersonalisation scores of the burnout scale ($R = .365$, $R^2 = .133$, $p < .000$). The variables shown in Table 5 account for 13% of the total variance in depersonalisation.

Personal Accomplishment

The mobbing behaviour emphasised in the three sub-scales of the mobbing scale show a low but significant relationship with the teachers' personal accomplishment scores on the burnout scale ($R = .166$, $R^2 = .027$, $p < .006$). The variables mentioned in Table 5 account for 3% of the total variance in personal accomplishment.

Discussion

In this research, we investigated the relationship of mobbing with alienation and burnout experienced by teachers.

With regard to the relationship between mobbing behaviour of school administrators and teachers' alienation, mobbing, particularly the negative communication dimension, had a significant and positive relationship with all dimensions of alienation. Psychologically exhausting actions such as being ignored by school administrators in the school environment, being constantly criticised and being accused can cause teachers to become alienated. Uğur and Erol (2015) point out that, in order to prevent alienation, the employee should have control over the work, autonomy, and participation in management.

It is considered that the effect of negative communication, especially on the isolation dimension of alienation, is rather high. Nonverbal but irritating behaviour in the school environment within the context of negative communication results in an individual alienating himself/herself. Teachers who have been subjected to this isolation in work life become totally alienated from work and their students over time. Schlichte, Yssel and Merbler (2005) state that teachers have an increased feeling of burnout if social relations are weak.

It is also noteworthy that negative communication has a significant and positive relationship with the meaninglessness and powerlessness dimensions of alienation. If the employee feels himself under pressure in the workplace, is exposed to threats, harassment, humiliation, or neglected, he/she will begin to believe the meaninglessness of what he/she does and feel powerlessness in this situation. Over time the individual may begin to question the reason why he/she works.

It is seen that, although at a low level, negative communication has an effect on alienation, whereas the task and workload dimensions have no significant relation with the school alienation dimension. Although the teachers are exposed to all kinds of negative behaviour in the school environment, they try to relieve these effects by withdrawing themselves. Even though employees try to protect themselves, they feel powerless and inadequate in their work when work assigned to them is below or above their level, or if they are ridiculed. Therefore, it is an important finding of the study that the task dimension of mobbing predicts the powerlessness in alienation. Similarly, with regard to the workload, acts such as asking employees to perform unachievable tasks or making them the target of momentary anger also cause them to feel powerless, which, over time, results in them questioning the meaninglessness of their jobs and even isolate themselves from the working environment. As Vega and Comer (2005) point out, all this negatively affect the cost, productivity, creativity and innovation at the workplace.

The negative communication dimension of mobbing is positively and significantly correlated with all three dimensions of burnout. Being socially disturbed by their managers or other employees in the work environment gives rise to one's burnout. Van Dick and Wagner (2001) observed similar situations in their research.

The teachers stated that they were exposed to mobbing by their administrators who ignored and unjustly criticised them and by their colleagues who gossiped about them and excluded them from social events. Such behaviour, in the dimension of negative communication, results in employees experiencing emotional exhaustion and becoming alienated from work. It is notable that the negative communication dimension predicts the depersonalisation dimension of burnout at a very high level. Teachers who are caught up in the cycle of obligatory service cannot be productive and successful in their jobs.

In this context, it is possible to say that the dimension of negative communication also predicts a decrease in the personal success dimension of burnout. For this reason, appropriate management practices and social relations in the school

environment will reduce the burnout of employees. Despite the fact that there is no dimensioning about mobbing behaviour in the literature, when the items under the task sub-dimension are considered, they are latent behaviours decreasing employee's performance. It is possible to say that emotional burnout, depersonalisation and personal accomplishment are more likely to occur when employees are assigned tasks that are insignificant or lower than their level of competence, some information related to the work is hidden, and they are mocked in matters related to the workplace. In particular, it can be stated that newly employed teachers who do not receive sufficient support from the school administrator experience more burnout. Schlichte et al. (2005) state that newly employed teachers feel themselves alone in the work environment. In the work environment, the employee who is left alone starts to feel alienation from his/her profession (Brown & Roloff, 2011). In addition, work overload, asking of employees to do unreasonable or unachievable tasks and making them the target of momentary anger may cause them to become alienated from their work, become unwilling to work and have low productivity without any devotion to their work. An employee who is alienated from work cannot fulfil his/her duty properly and is confronted with burnout syndrome that negatively affects the organisation.

Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations. Firstly, it was conducted in public primary schools. Teachers in secondary, high and private schools were not included in the study. This is considered to be a limitation of the study. Another limitation of the study was that the relationship of mobbing was confined only to alienation and burnout while the association between mobbing and other organisational behaviour could not be investigated.

Conclusion

Mobbing behaviour of school administrators was found to have a positive and significant relationship with teachers' alienation and burnout. In other words, the more school administrators tended to exhibit mobbing behaviour towards their subordinates, the more teachers experienced alienation and burnout. It was also revealed from the study that mobbing behaviour of school administrators mostly predicts the powerlessness dimension of alienation while mobbing behaviour mostly predicts the depersonalisation dimension of burnout.

As a result, the teachers who were exposed to mobbing behaviour were to experience alienation and burnout. Those teachers cannot be expected to contribute to the development of the school, their own improvement and the academic success of the students.

Recommendations to Practice

Based on the conclusions, we recommend that school administrators adopt a democratic, reliable and fair attitude towards their subordinates. The Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) should provide school administrators with in-service training and seminars about democratic processes at schools. It will also be useful if school administrators are trained in terms of leadership behaviour in order to increase performance, efficiency, job satisfaction and motivation of teachers.

Recommendations to Theory

In further research, the mediating role of alienation on the effect of school administrators' mobbing behaviour on teachers' burnout level can also be investigated.

Authors' Contributions

ASB wrote the introduction and literature review. YI collected the data study and conducted the statistical analyses. Both authors contributed to the results and discussion.

Notes

- i. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.
- ii. DATES: Received: 10 August 2019; Revised: 25 September 2020; Accepted: 26 November 2020; Published: 28 February 2022.

References

- Avcı U & Kaya U 2013. Yıldırma algısı ve etkileri: Hizmet sektöründe bir araştırma [The mobbing and its effects: A study in the service industry]. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi*, 68(2):1–25. Available at <http://acikerisim.mu.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12809/8859/umut-avci.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Accessed 1 March 2022.
- Boshoff SM, Potgieter JC, Ellis SM, Mentz K & Malan L 2018. Validation of the Teacher Stress Inventory (TSI) in a multicultural context: The SABPA study. *South African Journal of Education*, 38(Suppl. 2):Art. #1491, 13 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v38ns2a1491>
- Brown LA & Roloff ME 2011. Extra-role time, burnout and commitment: The power of promises kept. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 74(4):450–474. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1080569911424202>
- Cemaloglu N 2007. The exposure of primary school teachers to bullying: An analysis of various variables. *Social Behavior and Personality*, 35(6):789–802. <https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2007.35.6.789>
- Cheung CK 2008. Lagged harm of work restructuring and work alienation to work commitment. *International Journal of Employment Studies*, 16(2):170–207.
- Christensen LB, Johnson RB & Turner LA 2015. *Arastirma yontemleri desen ve analiz* [Research methods, desing, and analysis]. Translated by A Aypay. Ankara, Turkey: Anı Yayıncılık.

- Çobanoğlu Ş 2005. *Mobbing ve başa çıkma yöntemleri* [Mobbing and coping methods]. İstanbul, Turkey: Timaş Publishing.
- Cordes CL & Dougherty TW 1993. A review and an integration of research on job burnout. *Academy of Management Review*, 18(4):621–656. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1993.9402210153>
- Daniel TA 2006. *Bullies in the workplace: A focus on the "abusive disrespect" of employees*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management. Available at <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.595.9516&rep=rep1&type=pdf>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Davenport G 2011. Workplace bullying. *Human Resources*, 1:36.
- Demirel AG, Ötken AB & Kunday Ö 2012. Mobbing and work alienation: Support from colleagues as a moderator. *H.U. İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 30(1):1–28. <https://doi.org/10.17065/huniibf.103699>
- De Wet C 2014. Educators' understanding of workplace bullying. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(1):Art. #767, 16 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/201412120954>
- Durusu H & Cemaloğlu N 2019. Öğretmenlerin yıldırma yaşama, işyeri arkadaşlık algısı ve örgütsel bağlılık düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki [The relationships between the mobbing levels of primary school teachers, their perceptions of work place friendship and their organizational commitment]. *Türk Eğitim Bilimleri Dergisi*, 17(1):20–38. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/744027>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Elma C 2003. İlköğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin işe yabancılaşması: Ankara ili örneği [Alienation of primary school teachers from work: Example of Ankara Province]. PhD thesis. Ankara, Turkey: Ankara University. Available at <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=IMOERTPKOhZub3L3NdfxPA&no=CjRufAaxBZKmcLerT8a30A>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Ergin C 1993. *Doktor ve hemşirelerde tükenmişlik ve Maslach tükenmişlik ölçeğinin uyarlanması. VII* [Burnout in doctors and nurses and adaptation of Maslach Burnout Scale VII]. Paper presented at the National Psychology Congress Scientific Studies, Ankara, Turkey, 22–25 September.
- Friedman IA & Farber BA 1992. Professional self-concept as a predictor of teacher burnout. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 86(1):28–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.1992.9941824>
- Gliner JA, Morgan GA & Leech NL 2015. *Uygulamada araştırma yöntemleri: Desen ve analizi bütünleştiren yaklaşım* [Research methods in applied settings: An integrated approach to design and analysis] (2nd ed). Translated by S Turan. Ankara, Turkey: Nobel Yayın Dağıtım.
- Gül H 2009. İş sağlığında önemli bir psikososyal risk: Mobbing-psikolojik yıldırma [An important psychosocial risk in occupational health: Mobbing-psychological bullying]. *TAF Preventive Medicine Bulletin*, 8(6):515–520.
- İnanlı Y & Tunç B 2012. Kadın öğretmenlerin kariyer engeller ile iş doyum düzeyleri arasındaki ilişki [Effect of career barriers facing women teachers on their level of job satisfaction]. *Eğitim Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2(2):203–222. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/697391>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Kahveci G & Demirtaş Z 2014. Örgüt kültürünün örgütsel yabancılaşmaya etkisi: Örgütsel güvenin aracılık rolü [The effect of organizational cultures on organizational alienation: The mediating role of organizational trust]. *Turkish Journal of Educational Studies*, 1(3):27–62. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/402909>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Leonard K 2018. *The importance of interaction in workplace issues*. Available at <https://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-interaction-workplace-issues-11429.html>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Leymann H 1996. The content and development of mobbing at work. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 5(2):165–184. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13594329608414853>
- Maslach C, Schaufeli WB & Leiter MP 2001. Job burnout. *Annual Review Psychology*, 52:397–422. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397>
- Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education 2017. *İl istatistikleri* [Provincial statistics].
- Okçu V & Çetin H 2017. Investigating the relationship among the level of mobbing experience, job satisfaction and burnout levels of primary and secondary school teachers¹. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1):148–161. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2017.050119>
- Pienaar J & Van Wyk D 2006. Teacher burnout: construct equivalence and the role of union membership. *South African Journal of Education*, 26(4):541–551. Available at <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/view/25089>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Pines AM 1993. Burnout: An existential perspective. In WB Schaufeli, C Maslach & T Marek (eds). *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research*. Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Saunders M, Lewis P & Thornhill A 2009. *Research methods for business students* (5th ed). London, England: Pearson Education.
- Schlichte J, Yssel N & Merbler J 2005. Pathways to burnout: Case studies in teacher isolation and alienation. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 50(1):35–40. <https://doi.org/10.3200/PSFL.50.1.35-40>
- Seeman M 1959. On the meaning of alienation. *American Sociological Review*, 24(6):783–791.
- Shallcross L, Sheehan M & Ramsay S 2007. Workplace mobbing: Experiences in the public sector. *International Journal of Organisational Behaviour*, 13(2):56–70. Available at <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/43891/1/paper4Shallcross.pdf%282%29.pdf>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Talmor R, Reiter S & Feigin N 2005. Factors relating to regular education teacher burnout in inclusive education. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 20(2):215–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250500055735>
- Tummers LG, Bekkers V, Van Thiel S & Steijn B 2015. The effects of work alienation and policy alienation on behavior of public employees. *Administration &*

- Society*, 47(5):596–617.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399714555748>
- Uğur A & Erol Z 2015. Örgütlerde kritik sorun kaynağı olarak işe yabancılaşma, yabancılaşma ve bürokrasi arasındaki ilişkiye yönelik kavramsal bir yaklaşım [Work alienation as a source of a critical problem in organizations, a conceptual approach to the relation between alienation and bureaucracy]. *Kastamonu Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 8:182–192. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/309295>. Accessed 31 December 2021.
- Van Dick V & Wagner U 2001. Stress and strain in teaching: A structural equation approach. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 71(2):243–259. <https://doi.org/10.1348/000709901158505>
- Vega G & Comer DR 2005. Sticks and stones may break your bones, but words can break your spirit: Bullying in the workplace. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 58:101–109.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-005-1422-7>
- Yılmaz S & Sarpkaya P 2009. Eğitim örgütlerinde yabancılaşma ve yönetimi [Alienation in educational organizations and its' management]. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 6(2):314–333.
- Zengin Y & Kaygın E 2016. Örgütsel adalet ve örgütsel yabancılaşma arasındaki ilişkiyi belirlemeye yönelik bir araştırma [An investigation to determine the relationship between organizational justice and organizational alienation]. *Akademik Bakış Dergisi*, 56:391–415. Available at <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/383410>. Accessed 31 December 2021.