

The Validity and Reliability of the Mobbing Scale (MS)

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to develop the Mobbing Scale and examine its validity and reliability. The sample of the study consisted of 515 persons from Sakarya and Bursa. In this study, construct validity, internal consistency, test-retest reliability, and item analysis of the scale were examined. As a result of factor analysis for construct validity, four factors have emerged which are named humiliation, discrimination, sexual harassment, and communication barriers. These subscales consist of 23 items and account for the 59.97% of the total variance. The internal consistency reliability coefficients were .91 for humiliation, .77 for discrimination, .79 for sexual harassment, and .79 for communication barriers. Findings also demonstrated that item-total correlations ranged from .54 to .78. Test-retest reliability coefficients were .78 and .91 for four subscales, respectively. The item-total correlations ranged from .54 to .78. According to these findings the Mobbing Scale can be regarded as a valid and reliable instrument that could be used in the field of education and psychology.

Key Words

Mobbing, Validity, Reliability.

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In recent years, especially in industrialized countries, “mobbing”, which is spreading among workers because of increased competition in organizations, and aimed for putting the target person away from the work place, is causing the work life to become unhealthy in psychological dimension (Tan, 2005). As a concept, mobbing is defined as emotional assaults subjected to an employee working in an organization, and done for different reasons, by the superior(s)/colleague(s) or subordinate(s). After all, in the studies of mobbing, it is seen that although the contents are the same, different concepts are used interchangeably. For example, the terms bullying/victimization, emotional abuse, maltreatment/mis-treatment, harassment and abuse are some of the concepts often used to define mobbing (Yaman, 2007, 2009).

While Field (1996) deals with mobbing as constant and cruel attacks to a victim’s self-confidence and self-esteem by a bully, Namie and Namie (2003) express that the concept of mobbing involves all kinds of negative attitudes in the work place. Mobbing is also thought as offensive behaviors that are not reflected out like harassment (Fineman, Sims, & Gabriel, 2005). Studies based on the implementation show that victims’ character and psychosocial factors are the two reasons of mobbing at work (Einarsen, 1999). Poor working conditions can also be seen among the reasons of mobbing (Zapf, 1999). The reflections of the mobbing on employees are seen as being excluded in the organization, harassment, sexual harassment, maltreatment, communicative obstacles, not assigning a task, giving task below/under the capacity, inhibiting legal rights, arrogance and degrading employees, misinforming, not transferring the knowledge, using the employee for self benefits, humiliation, and bringing down.

Mobbing at work comes out in different ways. Downwards Mobbing is where employees are subjected to such treatment by their superiors in rank or position. Upwards Mobbing is opposite, meaning superiors are subjected such treatment by employees. (this is very rare). Horizontal Mobbing is present among the employees by the colleagues (Branch, Sheehan, Barker, & Ramsay, 2004). In addition, in research indicates two kinds of mobbing as individual and group mobbing (Yagil, 2004).

Leymann (1996), one of the foremost researchers of this field, investigated the people claimed as “uneasy” in an organization, and found that the claimed people weren’t in fact uneasy, and that their behaviors weren’t caused by personality defect. Leymann, then, brought out that

the working conditions and culture of the organization created an atmosphere that stamped those people as “uneasy”. While studying these effects in working places in Sweden, Leymann wrote that systematically hostile and unmoral communication subjected to one person by one or more person(s) is defined as mobbing (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2003).

Since the day, the concept of mobbing has attracted great attention in both theoretical and practical meaning, and has been the subject of many research studies. As well as general researches on mobbing at work (e.g., Casimir, 2002; Lewis, & Orford, 2005; Mikkelsen, 2004; Yaman, 2007, 2008; Zapf, & Einarsen, 2001), more specialized research have also been intensified in some other fields like the psychological effects of mobbing at work (DiMartino, 2003; Leymann, & Gustaffson, 1996; Lynch, & O'Moore, 2004; Mikkelsen, & Einarsen, 2002), the causes of mobbing (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994; Eriksen, & Einarsen, 2004; Hoel, 2004; Sheehan, Barker, & Rayner, 1999; Zapf, 1999) and relationship between mobbing and organizational climate (Vartia, 1996; Vickers, 2006). The findings showed that women academicians are more often exposed to mobbing (Björkqvist, Österman, & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994) and that superiors put mobbing into practice more than employees (Yaman, 2007). The physical effects of mobbing on victims disperse in wide fan such as: chronic insomnia, chronic tiredness syndrome, losing/gaining too much weight, anorexia, neck/back ache, allergic reactions/irritation and rash, tachycardia, mouth dryness, dizziness, fear of losing consciousness, muscle tenseness/cramp attacks, perspiratory/aura or cold wave, trembling/twitches, difficulty in breathing, headache/migraine, change in blood pressure, stomachache, diarrhea, alopecia/grey hair, chest ache, sickness/puking, intestines complaints, hearing loss, skin dryness, serious cuts and pitting/ deadness in hands and feet (Blase, & Blase, 2003; Björkqvist et al., 1994; Leymann, 1996; Yaman, 2007).

Among the most important psychological effects of mobbing on victims come stress, unhappiness, sadness, tension, feel of insecurity, demotivation, unwilling to go to work, keeping the defense mechanism always on, nervousness, excessive reaction or unresponsiveness, depressive mood, lack of self-confidence, fear of losing job, thought of resigning, crying/laughing attacks, worrying, paranoia, embarrassment, aggressiveness, feel of squashed, panic attack and chimera (Björkqvist

et al., 1994; Blase, & Blase, 2003; Bren, & McNamara, 2004; Cusanck, 2000; Davenport et al., 2003; Lewis, 2004; Leymann, 1996; Mikkelsen, & Einarsen, 2002; Tınaz, 2006; Yaman, 2007; Zapf, 1999).

The effects of mobbing are highly important on employees' positive attitudes, satisfaction from their works and organizational trust and loyalty. For this reason, the development of a reliable and valid mobbing scale is crucial. A review of the national literature shows that there is no measurement instrument to evaluate this construct. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a measurement instrument that is capable of evaluating mobbing reliably.

When the research studies in Turkey are investigated, it is clear that most descriptive research are conducted based on the Leymann's typology (Bağçe, 2007; Dilman, 2007; Ertürk, 2005; Gökçe, 2006; Kılıç, 2006; Gücenmez, 2007; Güneş, 2006; Işık, 2007; Yaman, 2007; Yavuz, 2007), it is seen that.

Method

Sample

The sample of the study consisted of 515 public employees who are employed in different sectors in Sakarya and Bursa, Turkey. Of the participants, 169 were females; 346 were males. The mean age of the participants was 30 years.

Procedure

As a first step of the procedure, relevant literature and studies of mobbing were examined. Relevant literature has been reviewed in order to identify the behaviors that can be listed under the banner of mobbing. Following the identification of mobbing behaviors, a pre-form was developed, consisting of 45 items. The items of the pre-form were evaluated in terms of content validity by academicians and measurement experts. After the corrections and eliminations, 23 items were retained for the scale. In this study, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to examine the factor structure of the scale according to the data obtained from the Turkish participants. To understand whether a model is consistent with the data, the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and the Comparative-Fit Index (CFI) should be above .90. In addition, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (RMSEA) should be .05

or below to indicate a satisfactory fit. In addition to these, whether or not items have significant factor loadings and regardless of factor correlations and item errors display significant relationships have also been examined (Hu, & Bentler, 1999). Test re-test and internal consistency reliability analyses and item analysis of the inventory were examined.

Results

As a result of factor analysis for construct validity, four factors have emerged which are named as humiliation, discrimination, sexual harassment, and communication barriers. These factors consist of 23 items and account for the 59.97 % of the total variance. Factor loadings ranged from .52 to .78 for humiliation, .54 to .76 for discrimination, .71 to .85 for sexual harassment, and .52 to .75 communication barriers. Similarly, the results of CFA indicated that the model was well fit and Chi-Square value ($\chi^2=914.29$, $N=515$, $sd=220$, $p=0.00$) which was calculated for the adaptation of the model was found to be significant. The goodness of fit index values of the model were RMSEA=.078, NFI=.95, CFI=.96, IFI=.96, RFI=.94, and SRMR=.074. The internal consistency reliability coefficients were .91 for humiliation, .77 for discrimination, .79 for sexual harassment, and .79 for communication barriers. Findings also demonstrated that item-total correlations ranged from .54 to .78. Test-retest reliability coefficients were .78 and .91 for four subscales, respectively. The item-total correlations ranged from .54 to .78.

Discussion

The aim of this research was develop the MS and examine its psychometric properties. Overall, findings demonstrated that this scale had acceptable and high validity and reliability scores (Büyüköztürk, 2004; Büyüköztürk, Akgün, Özkahveci & Demirel, 2004; Tabachnick, & Fidell, 1996; Tezbaşaran, 1996). Therefore, the scale is concluded to be a valid and reliable instrument that can be used in the field of education. However, because participants were public employees in the current study, the examination of factor structure of the MS for other populations should be studied in future.

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