Chapter 13

Effect of Cynical Individual Factor on the Reverse Mobbing Tendency: A Planned Behavior

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to reveal the interaction between the cynicism levels and reverse mobbing tendencies of employees under the same organizational climate. In line with this purpose, a study was performed via the survey method on 120 people in a public institute in Turkey. The sample size of the study is limited with the public institute included in the study due to cynicism and reverse mobbing levels vary in each organizational climate. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using the confidence, correlation, multiple regression and Kruskal-Wallis H tests. According to the results of these analyses, a medium-level positive significant relationship was determined between the cynicism levels and reverse mobbing tendencies of the employees. The cynicism dimension that increases the reverse mobbing tendency of the employees most was determined to be the behavioral cynicism with the coefficient of 1.922. As a result, cynicism was added to the literature as a new factor affecting the reverse mobbing significantly.

INTRODUCTION

Mobbing, in other words psychological harassment, has become a common organizational behavior which about 120,000 new individuals face annually according to Heinz Leymann (1996). Factors such as cronyism and nepotism, as well as the increasing importance of performance and interpersonal competition in organizations, have increased the number of mobbing incidents. These situations can easily materialize...
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while they take advantage of the features of hierarchical/autocratic structures, and they have three types of formations: top-down, peer-to-peer, and bottom-up reverse mobbing. The most frequent mobbing type in the extant literature is top-down mobbing which occurs when any executive at any level of the organization has violent and/or aggressive behaviors against a targeted subordinate. The primary reason for an executive targeting a subordinate is not related to the business, but is rather personal in nature.

The peer-to-peer mobbing type is mainly seen in working groups. Gangs of employees intentionally commit physical/verbal violence and psychologically harass uninvolved employees for any reason. In this case, the objective matches that of top-down mobbing: to ensure that the targeted person is leaving the job voluntarily. The last mobbing model is the bottom-up mobbing form. Even if it seems impossible to those who first hear the term, bottom-up mobbing is seen to be a prevalent configuration.

Reverse mobbing was defined by Uysal and Yavuz (2013) as “an act of intimidation where a subordinate, or a group of subordinates, aims to ruin the hierarchical status of a superior (rather than simply leaving the employment position) by psychologically harassing him/her on purpose because of the mobbing raised against them, personal disputes or politics”, and they may directly target the said executives. The most direct aim of reverse mobbing is to ensure the type of management that is desired by subordinates. For this purpose subordinates mostly exhibit behaviors such as working slower, retarding, intentionally distributing misinformation, and leaking information. Thus, reverse mobbing not only damages the targeted person, but also the organization because of counterproductive work behaviors. Therefore, that scenario is one that must be examined regarding organized behaviors. Its results and influencing factors are able to be revealed within various studies. In studying the subjects of reverse mobbing and cynicism, factors which are considered to affect the prior were analyzed.

The purposes of this chapter are to analyze the reverse mobbing notion scientifically (a perspective which has been rarely addressed in mobbing literature) and to introduce a body of quantitative research about reverse mobbing into literature. The quantitative research carried out after this chapter tests the existence of a significant relationship between the cynicism levels and the reverse mobbing tendencies of employees, and it analyzes the possible correlative tendencies. In accordance with this purpose, blue-collar employees who work under heavy conditions were included in the study so a more realistic study was also conducted. An offered hypothesis between cynicism and reverse mobbing was tested. Within the scope of the research, a survey was conducted among the employees of a public body with a hierarchical-autocratical structure.

Given the modern workforce characteristics, this chapter is considered to be important in terms of bringing a different field of study to the existing mobbing references, examining the reverse mobbing tendencies of the employees who were exposed to psychological erosion from the organization’s executives, determining a cynicism dimension that is more effective in evaluating reverse mobbing tendencies, as well as in terms of freshly presenting cynicism as having an influence in reverse mobbing.

BACKGROUND: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Mobbing in Organizations

The mobbing notion was defined by Konrad Lorenz in the 1960s within the context of animal behaviors: “a group of small animals who threaten a single large animal” (Leymann, 1990, p.167). In his studies, Lorenz observed that “some ritualistically definite behaviors started to be privatized in vertebrates,