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Opinions of Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers on Mobbing

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the opinions of Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers (RCET) on mobbing in the workplace. The research focuses on RCET's definition of mobbing, the reasons for mobbing, the results of mobbing, and the suggestions of RCET to prevent mobbing. This study used the phenomenological method, one of the qualitative research methods. The data obtained from the interview forms were analyzed by the content analysis method. The findings were organized and presented under themes and sub-themes. The study group of the research was determined by a systematic sampling technique, one of the probability-based sampling methods. The study group of the research consisted of 35 RCET working in the middle schools of Mersin central districts in the 2023-2024 academic years. Findings revealed that participants defined the concept of mobbing using terms such as pressure, violence, distress, attack, discomfort, implication, and exposure. It was found that participants expressed reasons for mobbing, such as establishing dominance, jealousy, inadequacy, and conflict of interest. It was determined that participants indicated the results of mobbing, such as asynchrony, inefficiency, failure, resignation, reluctance, and fear-anxiety. The participants suggested solutions such as support, awareness activities, relationships and communication, knowledge of legislation and laws, equality, responsibility, trust, problem identification, solution orientation, and providing education.

Keywords: *Religious culture, ethics, teacher, mobbing, religious education.*

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Introduction

Problem Statement

Organizations can be defined as structures where individuals come together to achieve specific objectives. Within these structures, interpersonal interactions can sometimes lead to various problems, which in turn can affect the organization's operations, employees' motivation, and, thus, the organization's sustainability. Considering that employees spend a significant portion of their lives in work environments, it is inevitable that negativity in the workplace will also impact their family and social lives. Therefore, identifying the sources of problems in the work life and resolving them with appropriate strategies is crucial at both organizational and individual levels.

Among the problems encountered in work life, mobbing behavior is a common issue. Leymann (1990) defines mobbing as hostile and unethical forms of communication systematically applied by an individual or group of individuals against a single person. The education sector is one of the fields where mobbing behavior is frequently observed. In the dynamics between teachers, administrators, and students, mobbing poses a potential risk for each individual; teachers encountering mobbing can lead to costly consequences at both the individual and institutional levels. Although all of the stakeholders who work at schools are subjected to mobbing, the teachers who experience mobbing outnumber the other stakeholders according to the literature (Akbaşlı et al., 2020); Akgül, 2017; Çelebi & Taşçı Kaya, 2014; Davidoff & Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2020; Ertürk, 2011). In addition to the studies, which have been done on teachers experiencing mobbing, there are also studies on branch teachers which have analyzed the mobbing experiences of these teachers (Alğan, 2017; Duran, 2022; Gülenç, 2019; Karakoç, 2022). One of the teaching branches in middle and secondary schools is Religious Culture and Ethics in Turkey. They teach students about the Religion of Islam, and they provide general information about the religion of other cultures. As these teachers' branches are related to religion, they can experience some problems in their workplaces because Turkey's population includes people who have different cultures (Hofstede, 2011). It has been determined that there is Big Power Distance Culture by 66%, Small Power Distance Culture by 34%, Individualistic Culture by 37%, Collectivistic Culture by 63%, Masculine Culture by 45%, Feminine Culture by 55%, Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Culture by 85%, Weak Uncertainty Avoidance Culture by 15%,

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Long-Term Orientation Culture by 46%, Short-Term Orientation Culture by 54%, Indulgence Culture by 49% and Restraint Culture by 51% in Turkey (Culture Factor Group, 2023). The school organization may have school administrators, teachers, parents and students with cultures of opposite sub-dimensions of these cultural dimensions. These stakeholders may have different opinions about religion depending on their cultures (House et al., 1997). Therefore, they can display positive or negative attitudes and behaviors towards the RCET, who teach students religion. In the literature, there aren't any studies on the RCET's mobbing, which have been encountered in Turkey. In this context, determining the RCET's opinion on the definition of mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing and their suggestions for mobbing is important to determine the problems in relation to mobbing experienced by RCET and provide important information to authorities so that they take proactive measures.

Objective of the Research

The primary aim of this research is to meticulously analyze and determine the opinions of RCET on mobbing and their suggestions to prevent mobbing. Initially, the research aims to determine "how RCET define mobbing in their work places". In this context, a comprehensive data collection process will be conducted to identify the types of mobbing experiences teachers encounter and the frequency of these situations. Secondly, the reasons and results of mobbing will be examined. Another significant objective of the research is to reveal the teachers' suggestions to prevent mobbing.

This study aims to provide the necessary knowledge and strategies for RCET to participate in a healthier and more supportive work environment. By offering valuable insights into the measures that can be taken to prevent and reduce mobbing in the education sector, it aims to contribute to positive changes in the field of education. The information obtained through this research will serve as an important resource for all relevant stakeholders and lay the groundwork for the development of effective strategies to combat mobbing.

Significance of the Research

The significance of this research stems from its focus on the phenomenon of mobbing, a prevalent issue among RCET in the education sector. Mobbing is a serious concern that can adversely affect teachers' psychological and physical health, professional motivation, and consequently, the quality of the educational process. This study is the first qualitative study that has been done on RCET's opinions about mobbing in Turkey and it is also the first study that has been carried out on RCET's opinions about mobbing in Mersin Province. Despite the fact that there are studies on branch teachers, which have analyzed the mobbing experiences of these teachers (Alğan, 2017; Duran, 2022; Gülenç, 2019; Karakoç, 2022), there aren't any studies on RCET's opinions about mobbing. Therefore, this study makes an important contribution to the literature. As the RCET's branch is directly related to religion, which is a delicate issue, performing a research on the RCET's opinion about mobbing requires careful attention and serious consideration. Throughout the history, it is widely known that religious educators and teachers have been exposed to maltreatment. They have been exposed to physical and psychological violence. As Foucault (1988) says, the activities, treatments, traditions and customs which occurred in the past doesn't disappear; they change forms and they continue occurring in a subtle and indirect way. This study tries to show whether maltreatments, negative attitudes, misbehaviors towards religious teachers continue and how they occur if they continue. The results of this study can contribute to the literature, which is about the maltreatment, negative attitudes and misbehaviors exhibited towards religious teachers. This study provides a comprehensive analysis and valuable resource for understanding RCET's opinions on mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing they experience, and their suggestions for these situations. Such analyses can lay the foundation for developing effective support systems and intervention programs for RCET who have experienced mobbing. Moreover, the findings of this study could assist in developing policies and practices that reduce the risk of mobbing for RCET and contribute to creating a more supportive and healthy work environment. Therefore, this research holds strategic importance in raising awareness about mobbing in the education sector and enhancing the capacity to combat this issue. Developing a deep understanding of the mobbing problems faced by teachers in the workplace is a critical step towards improving the quality of education and supporting the professional well-being of teachers.

Research Questions

- How do RCET define mobbing in their workplaces?
- What are the reasons of mobbing according to Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers?
- What are the results of mobbing experiences according Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers?
- What are the suggestions of Religious Culture and Ethics Teachers to prevent mobbing?

Literature Review

Concept of Mobbing

In the research literature, mobbing behaviors are examined in four main categories: physical, verbal, relational, and cyber-mobbing. Physical mobbing is defined by acts of aggression towards an individual's physical integrity, such as hitting, pushing, or punching (Olweus, 1993). Relational mobbing targets an individual's position in a social context and is usually carried out through tactics like spreading rumors, intentionally excluding someone from social activities or group interactions, and alienating them from friendships (Meyer, 2023). Verbal mobbing occurs as verbal attacks or mocking comments are directed at an individual's personality, appearance, or abilities (Duffy & Sperry, 2014). Cyber-mobbing encompasses acts of psychological harassment or aggression conducted via text messages, emails, social media platforms, and other digital communication tools (Hinduja & Patchin, 2023). Each of these types is critically important for understanding the different mechanisms and effects of mobbing, emphasizing the necessity to first identify these behaviors and then develop effective intervention strategies (Brank et al., 2012).

This term "mobbing" was initially used to describe harassing behaviors among animals or bullying and harassment cases among students in school settings. In the 1980s, Heinz Leymann demonstrated that harassment and bullying behaviors also occur in workplaces (Çobanoğlu, 2005). According to Leymann, mobbing is characterized by hostile and unethical communication directed systematically by one or several individuals towards a single person. These actions are frequently and persistently applied, hence the process can lead to significant psychological and social issues (Leymann, 1990). Leymann's work on this phenomenon in the workplace establishes a foundation for global research on workplace mobbing behaviors, especially considering the prior lack of research in this area (Tınaz, 2006).

Christmas (2007) described mobbing as actions of emotional assault and continuous attack and pressure targeted at specific individuals within an organization. According to this definition, mobbing acts are strategic behaviors deliberately employed within an organization to achieve specific objectives and induce stress (Ertürk, 2011). These definitions elucidate the multifaceted and complex nature of mobbing behaviors and highlight their psychological impact on individuals.

Mobbing Process

The mobbing process is a phenomenon that can occur in various organizations, irrespective of the organizational culture.

Stages of the Mobbing Process

Within the theoretical framework presented by Heinz Leymann in 1990, the mobbing process is addressed through a four-stage structure, extensively examined in organizational behavior and work psychology literature, detailed as follows (Şimşek Ertek, 2009):

1. **Conflict Stage:** In this stage, interpersonal conflicts are characterized, yet explicit mobbing actions are not yet evident.
2. **Assault Stage:** The victim is continuously subjected to negative behaviors. At this stage, constant criticism, humiliation, assigning meaningless tasks, slander, isolation, and threats of violence are systematically employed by the perpetrators.
3. **Personnel Management Stage:** Often, management tends to assume the victim is at fault, opting to ignore the problem or dismiss the victim rather than resolve the issue.
4. **Exit from Working Life Stage:** In the final stage of the mobbing process, the victim exits from the workforce for various reasons. This may occur through dismissal or the victim's own decision to leave the job (Rai & Agarwal, 2016).

Causes of Mobbing

Individual Reasons

Research exploring the origins of mobbing behaviors significantly addresses the psychological structure and motivations of individuals who engage in mobbing actions (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003). According to Leymann (1990), individuals often resort to mobbing strategies to conceal their own internal deficiencies or insecurities. Leymann identifies four primary reasons behind mobbing actions: Firstly, coercing individuals into accepting certain group norms or rules; secondly, deriving pleasure from feelings of hostility; thirdly, enjoying causing distress to others; and fourthly, reinforcing personal biases and strengthening the belief in their validity. These factors demonstrate that mobbing behaviors are shaped by both individual and social dynamics (Davenport et al., 2014).

In examining mobbing behaviors, the personality traits of the victims also constitute a significant analytical dimension. Studies reveal that individuals with low self-esteem, introverted personalities, and lacking conflict management skills are more susceptible to mobbing actions. On the other hand, victims who perceive themselves as more honest, hardworking, punctual, successful, and stronger compared to their colleagues can also be susceptible to mobbing (Killoren, 2014). These perceptions can lead to the victim's attitudes and behaviors being perceived as a threat by colleagues, triggering aggressive actions. In this context, the strong personality traits and abilities of the victim can be perceived as a threat by employers and other employees, contributing to the initiation of mobbing actions (Thomas, 2017).

In the literature, there is a lot of research on the individual reasons for mobbing. For example, in the research done by Hodson et al. (2006), they concluded that the workplace was an arena, which was suffused by power relations and they found that employees who were relationally less powerful among others, the employees who had insecure jobs and minority status, and the employees engaged in low-skilled service work, were more likely to be bullied. Relational powerlessness is regarded as one of the important reasons explaining why individuals are subjected to mobbing. For instance, C. De Wet (2014) found that the relationally powerless victims (educators) were more subjected to public humiliation, disregard, isolation, and discrimination. Moreover, C. De Wet (2014) found that principals were the main perpetrators of workplace bullying and that they targeted those with lesser status. C. De Wet (2014) also found that incompetent and unprincipled managers abused formal, bureaucratic structures to bully educators; bullies (mostly school principals) abused their power because they had reward and coercive powers such as professional development opportunities, promotion, workload, as well as the appointment and dismissal of educators. Furthermore, Andersen et al. (2015) found that being overweight, low self-esteem, low sense of coherence, low socioeconomic status, inadequate coping skills, and lack of social skills and adaptive coping strategies were risk factors for being bullied at work.

Organizational Reasons

Mobbing behaviors are observable in various work environments, and the cultural and managerial structure of the workplace plays a critical role in the development of these behaviors. Organizational factors contributing to the emergence of mobbing behaviors include poor management, high stress levels at work, monotony, managers' disbelief or denial of mobbing incidents, and unethical practices (Davenport et al., 2014). These factors reflect the organizational dynamics that play a significant role in the formation and perpetuation of mobbing behaviors.

Research points to the role of management in the emergence of workplace mobbing behaviors, highlighting that incorrect personnel selection, seasonal or temporary employment, and competition among employees for vacant positions can lead to mobbing behaviors (Öztürk et al., 2015). Additionally, the use of mobbing to maintain organizational discipline, insufficient investment in human resources, overly hierarchical structures, closed-door policies, communication deficiencies, lack of conflict management strategies, leadership issues, the tendency to find scapegoats, inadequacies in teamwork, organizational change, and deficiencies in training are managerial factors that have been observed to contribute to the emergence of mobbing behaviors (Kirel, 2008). These factors are understood to be critical elements affecting both the formation and continuation of mobbing behaviors.

In the literature, there are a lot of studies on organizational reasons for mobbing. For example, in Sorrell's (2015) research, it was found that the organizational climate in the field of education used bullying as a way to remove seasoned educators from their jobs. Additionally, in Sorrell's (2015) research, participants indicated that a professional climate of nepotism and favoritism caused mobbing. Bowling and Beehr (2006) determined that mobbing resulted from the organization's lack of leadership, bad management, lack of rules and discipline, lack of institutionalization, and insufficient managers.

Consequences of Mobbing

Research in the academic literature demonstrates that mobbing behaviors have detrimental effects on the health, productivity, and overall well-being of organizations and their employees. These behaviors not only impact the victims and their families but also adversely affect organizational operations and, broadly, the national economy. Within the framework of this research, the consequences of mobbing behaviors will be examined in detail, analyzing these outcomes at both organizational and individual levels. This analysis aims to elucidate the comprehensive effects of mobbing behaviors and explore the various dimensions of these effects on organizations and individuals.

Individual Impact

Mobbing actions often lead to serious and extensive negative consequences for the affected individuals. The quality of life of victims significantly deteriorates when subjected to mobbing behaviors, which can even result in severe professional repercussions like job loss. Individual effects include anxiety, social isolation, low self-esteem, and a range of physical and psychological health issues (Dabu & Drăghici, 2013). Individuals exposed to mobbing are adversely affected economically, socially, and psychologically. Economically, there can be increased health expenditures due to deteriorated psychological health and a loss of regular income. Social consequences encompass damage to the individual's social image, exclusion by peers due to depressive behaviors, and negative perceptions within the family.

Psychological outcomes are indicated by depression, irrational fears, high blood pressure, sweating and trembling of hands, feelings of abandonment, and skin rashes, among other health issues (Tınaz, 2006). These multifaceted negative effects underscore the profound and serious impact of mobbing behaviors on individuals.

The degree of negative effects of mobbing behaviors on individuals is closely linked to the individual's commitment to their job. Individuals with a strong commitment to their job feel loyalty towards their workplace, value the organization's prestige, and often choose to remain silent in mobbing situations. For these individuals, mobbing is perceived not only as a professional violation but also as a personal one. On the other hand, individuals who view their job merely as a source of income and do not have a strong attachment to their work may consider leaving their job and finding a new one as an easier option when encountering mobbing. For these individuals, escaping a mobbing situation can be seen as an opportunity to distance themselves from a negative work environment, potentially creating a sense of relief with thoughts like, "I'm glad I'm out, I hope I never have to go back there" (Davenport et al., 2014). This dynamic illustrates how the psychological and professional impacts of mobbing on individuals interact with the level of the individual's commitment to their job.

In the literature, most of the studies on mobbing provided results related to the impact of mobbing on individuals. For example, Fahie and Devine (2014), regarding workplace mobbing on primary school teachers, concluded that teachers who were victims of workplace bullying were struggling with stress, isolation, self-doubt, and insomnia. Besides, most studies unanimously agree that there is an association between workplace bullying and suicidal thoughts (Leach et al., 2017). Psychological effects on the victims include stress, anxiety, and panic attacks according to the study done by Sansone and Sansone (2015). Another study verified that workplace bullying affected both men and women by making them feel fatigued and causing them to lose vigor all the time, which may lead to depression (Jarrett, 2020).

Organizational

Mobbing behaviors have serious negative consequences not only at the individual but also at the organizational level, potentially incurring significant costs for organizations. These behaviors create substantial psychological and economic burdens within the organization. Psychological costs manifest through increased conflicts among employees, an atmosphere of mistrust, diminished respect, and loss of motivation among staff, which can constrain creativity and productivity. Economic costs include increased absenteeism, resignations of skilled employees, costs associated with hiring and training new personnel, declines in performance, compensations paid to employees, and potential legal expenses (Tınaz, 2006). These costs highlight the profound and multidimensional impacts of mobbing behaviors on organizations.

In the literature, there are a lot of studies done on the organizational effects of mobbing. For example, in Dhar's study (2012), it was found that workplace bullying resulted in low levels of motivation and low morale of the employees, increased absenteeism, and employees' being involved in counterproductive work behavior. In her study, Tınaz (2006) found that there were psychological and economic costs of mobbing in the workplace. She determined that a decline in the value of organizational culture, negative organizational climate, limited creativity due to an insecure environment, conflict between individual employees were the psychological cost of mobbing. Besides, she found that increased sick leave, a high number of resignations, the cost of training new employees due to resignations, low job performance, decrease in quality work, early retirees, costs of unemployment, and workers compensation were the organizational cost of mobbing.

Mobbing in the Education Sector

In the education sector, mobbing is a common issue, particularly within the teacher-administrator-student triangle. As Çobanoğlu (2005) notes, individuals in this sector, including students, are subjected to mobbing actions. Perpetrators in the education sector may believe that their actions, which aim at establishing discipline, are not recognized as aggression. Administrators and teachers, in an attempt to assert dominance over students, may employ various mobbing tactics such as reprimanding students in front of the entire class, using mocking statements about failures, subjecting students to tests with challenging and unexpected questions, interpreting every action as an attempt at cheating, intimidating them with the prospect of failure, or assigning them derogatory names (Polat & Pakış, 2012). These actions can create a negative atmosphere in the educational environment, adversely affecting students' academic and social development.

In the education sector, administrators often target young teachers who exhibit free-thinking, initiative, and civil courage with mobbing actions. Teachers can also face harassment from students. Peer mobbing among colleagues is another problem encountered in this sector (Çobanoğlu, 2005; Daşçı Sönmez & Cemaloğlu, 2018). Thus, mobbing behaviors in education manifest in top-down, bottom-up, and horizontal directions.

The causes of mobbing behaviors in the education sector are examined in four main groups:

1. *Victim-related Reasons:* Characteristics such as physical disabilities, age, gender, higher education level, different dressing styles, and being young can make an individual a target for bullying.

2. *Personal Reasons:* Individual antipathies, inadequate leadership skills of administrators, or dissatisfaction with a person without a clear reason can lead to mobbing.
3. *Communication-related Reasons:* Hostile relationships within the organization or an individual's excessive emotional sensitivity can trigger mobbing behaviors.
4. *Psychological Reasons:* Inter-collegial competition, unresolved issues, the generally stressful nature of the organization, or the presence of individuals with psychological issues in the profession can influence mobbing (Uğurlu et al., 2012). These factors illustrate the multidimensional structure and interaction of mobbing behaviors in the education sector.

Mobbing behaviors have adversely affected teachers' satisfaction in both their professional and personal lives. Such behaviors also produce detrimental outcomes in the functioning of school organizations, including the creation of an atmosphere of distrust, a decrease in levels of respect, heightened stress levels, and erosion of organizational values (Kış, 2016). In this context, the development of effective coping skills for mobbing is of great significance for teachers, both individually and institutionally. Professionals in the education sector adopt various strategies to combat mobbing, and these methods have the potential to contribute to both individual and organizational improvement.

In the literature, there isn't any research on the mobbing experienced by RCET in Turkey. However, there is a research on the opinions of Pre-service Religious Culture and Ethics teachers related to cyber-mobbing, which was done by İşçitürk and Turan (2017). In this research, the Pre-service Religious Culture and Ethics teachers used metaphors for the physical-mental effects of mobbing, such as disease, schizophrenia, cancer, the black death, and nightmare, and they used metaphors for the attack on personal rights dimension of mobbing, such as rumor, murder, being unfair, being prisoned and moral corruption. Additionally, in the research done by Karakoç (2022), it was determined that teachers were mostly exposed to mobbing by the school administration and other teachers. Karakoç also found that 81.8% of the teachers stated that mobbing affected their organizational commitment negatively. Moreover, Şengül et al. (2023) found that the most common mobbing behavior, which the teachers perceived most at work, was related to the teachers' talking behind their colleagues' backs and teachers' mobbing perceptions differed significantly according to gender, education level and seniority. Furthermore, Akbaşı et al. (2020) revealed that in terms of mobbing dimensions, the highest level was determined as the prevention of professional practices, and the sub-dimensions of mobbing significantly predicted the sub-dimensions of teacher motivation.

Methodology

Research Design

This research is structured within the framework of qualitative methodology. Qualitative studies aim to provide an in-depth understanding from various perspectives by conducting detailed examinations of individuals' perceptions and experiences, thereby laying the groundwork for the development of new theories (Creswell, 2014). Qualitative methodology adopts an interdisciplinary and holistic approach, offering the opportunity to interpret events and phenomena through the meanings individuals ascribe to them (Altunışık et al., 2010). This type of research relies on the explanatory examination of subjective data and individuals' experiences within their natural environments and specific contexts. Under the term qualitative research, there are many sub-concepts related to different disciplines and exhibiting diversity; there is no universal definition of this method (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). This study used the phenomenological method, one of the qualitative research methods. This method is an interview-preferred data collection method to obtain the basic structure or truth underlying the meaning of experience. Semi-structured interview method was used. In this study, interviews were used with each participant using standard questions. The semi-structured interview method, in addition to the standard questions used in the interviews, allowed for asking different questions in the context of the subject, thus expanding the interview scope and acquiring richer data than expected.

Study Group

The study group of the research was determined by a systematic sampling technique, one of the probability-based sampling methods. Systematic sampling is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point but with a fixed, periodic interval. Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research are between 9 and 17, with a mean of 12-13 interviews (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). When the researcher thinks that a certain sample size is enough to collect the data in qualitative research, he can stop collecting the data when he reaches that sample size. There were 385 RCET teachers in Mersin central districts (Akdeniz, Yenisehir, Mezitli and Toroslar). Therefore, the researcher decided that the sample size including 35 participants is enough to collect data in the qualitative research. The study group of the research consisted of 35 RCET working in the middle schools of Mersin central districts (Akdeniz, Yenisehir, Mezitli and Toroslar) in the fall semester of 2023-2024 academic years. The researcher got the list of all the RCET teachers working in middle schools in central districts of Mersin by applying to the Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education. There were 385 RCET teachers in the population. He divided the population (385) with the target sample size (35) to calculate the interval.

The researcher chose every 11th member of the population as his sample. Within the scope of the research, the schools where the teachers worked were visited, and interviews were held with the principals on a voluntary basis.

The data regarding the gender, educational status, seniority in teaching, age, career leader, and experience in school management of the RCET forming the study group are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Study Group

Gender	f	%	Age	f	%
Male	20	57,14	22-30 years old	4	11,42
Female	15	42,85	31-40 years old	7	20,00
Educational Status			41-50 years old	11	31,42
Graduate	26	74,28	51 years and above	13	37,14
Post-graduate	9	25,71	Career Ladder		
Seniority in Teaching			Teacher	22	62,85
0-5 years	4	11,42	Expert Teacher	13	37,14
6-10 years	6	17,14	Experience in school management		
11-15 years	7	20,00	Yes	9	25,71
16 yıl-20 years	9	25,71	No	26	74,28
21 years and above	9	25,71	Total		
Total	35	100	Total	35	100

When the demographic characteristics of the participants in the research were examined; it was seen that 26 of the principals were male and 9 were female; 26 had graduate degrees and 9 had post-graduate degrees; 4 had professional seniority of 0-5 years, 6 had professional seniority of 11-15 years, 9 had professional seniority of 16-20 years, 9 had professional seniority above 20 years; 4 were 22-30 years old, 7 were 31-40 years old, 11 were 41-50 years old and 13 were above 50 years old; 22 were teachers and 13 were expert teachers. 26 didn't have any experience in school management and 9 had experience in school management.

Data Collection

Depending on the purposes of the research, interviews, which were one of the qualitative research techniques, were conducted with the RCET, and a semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions was applied to the RCET. The data of the research were collected with the "Semi-Structured Interview Form" developed by the researcher. The semi-structured interview form questions used in the research were prepared and organized by reviewing the relevant literature on mobbing and taking the opinions of experts who were two associate professors working at the department of educational administration, supervision, planning, and economy. An interview approach consisting of standardized open-ended questions was adopted in the preparation of the interview form. In this approach, the questions were carefully written in a certain order (Patton, 2002). In structured interviews, the interview is planned in advance, what kind of questions to be asked and what data to be collected are determined in advance in detail, and the determined interview plan is thus implemented (Lichtman, 2006; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). To increase the validity of the interview form, first of all, a pilot study was conducted with 3 RCET and the people who were pre-interviewed were not included in the study group. After the problems that emerged in the pilot study were identified and necessary corrections were made, the interview form was given its final form by taking expert opinions. Three experts in the field were consulted at the same time and feedback on the content validity of the interview form was obtained and the validity of the interview form was tried to be increased. Internal validity was ensured by looking at the consistency, meaningfulness of the findings and their coherence with the previously created conceptual framework and theories. Before conducting the interview, the RCET were given a small briefing about the purpose and importance of the study. The interviews were conducted on a voluntary basis, when the RCET were available. The interviews were detailed with probe questions when necessary. The answers given during the interviews were recorded in the interview forms.

Data Analysis

In the research, direct quotations were made from the opinions of the RCET participating in the interviews for internal reliability. However, the names of the teachers were not included as an ethical requirement when commenting on the findings; codes such as T1 (for Teacher1), M (Male), G (for Graduate), 11-15 Years (for Seniority), 41-50 (for ages), T2 (for Teacher2), F (for Female) P (for Postgraduate), 16-20 Years (for Seniority), 51 years and above (for ages) that represented the teachers were used. The data in the interview form were analyzed individually, and the categories were determined and reported. The content analysis technique was used in the analysis. Categorical and frequency analysis techniques were used in the content analysis (Kuş, 2012; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The reliability of content analysis techniques is related to the reliability of coders and coding categories (Lichtman, 2006). To increase the reliability of the study, the identified categories and common themes were examined separately by two domain experts

at Mersin University, who were experienced in qualitative research in addition to the researcher, then the researcher and these experts came together and the disagreement related to the common themes and codes determined were resolved and a high degree of common agreement on the themes and codes created was thus reached (Kümbetoğlu, 2020; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). Again, using the reliability formula suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), the percentage of the agreement between the coders was calculated. The reliability formula is stated as "Reliability = Agreement / (Agreement + Disagreement)". Accordingly, the agreement between the coders was found to be 81%. Thus inter-coder reliability was ensured because Miles and Huberman (1994) stated that it is acceptable to have an agreement above 70 % percent and above.

Findings/Results

The first question of the research, "How do you define the concept of mobbing?" was posed to the participants. To deepen and clarify the responses, an additional question was directed: "What term could you use instead of the mobbing concept?" When the answers were analyzed, it was found that participants described their perception of the mobbing concept using terms such as pressure, psychological violence, distress, psychological attack, discomfort, implication, exposure, weariness, and intimidation. A table summarizing these findings is provided below.

Table 2. RCET's Definitions of Mobbing

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Example Sentence
Pressure	11	32%	"Psychological, verbal, or physical pressure applied in their professional tasks" (T2, F, P, 16-20 Years, 51 Years and above)
Psychological Violence	8	23%	"Mobbing can be defined as psychological violence and pressure exerted on an individual" (T1, M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50)
Distress	4	11%	"Pressure, violence, distress, thus mobbing, leads to stress" (T4, M, G, 0-5 Years, 31-40 years)
Psychological Attack	3	8%	"Can be defined as a psychological attack experienced by individuals working together" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years)
Discomfort	3	8%	"Creating superiority over an individual through pressure and exhibiting discomforting behaviors" (T10, M, G, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years)
Implication	2	6%	"Continuously implicating an individual, ostracizing them with demeaning expressions" (T8, F, G, 21 Years and Above, 51 Years and Above)
Exposure	2	6%	"Mobbing can be defined as a form of pressure, exposure, dictating a situation" (T11, M, P, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years)
Weariness	1	3%	"The concept of tiring can also be used in place of mobbing" (T5, F, G, 0-5 Years, 22-30 Years)
Intimidation	1	3%	"The exhausting, intimidating pressure applied by one or more individuals onto another" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years)

One of the RCET participating in the study described her opinions on the definition of mobbing as follows:

"We can define the concept of mobbing as pressure applied systematically by one or several individuals to a single person, essentially an emotional attack. Alternatively, it can be seen as one person gathering others around themselves against another individual, aiming to isolate that person. I believe this also constitutes mobbing. Instead of the term mobbing, 'psychological violence' could be used. The term 'weariness' can also replace mobbing. Based on the definition of mobbing, it is apparent that these terms are synonymous with it (T5, F, G, 0-5 Years, 22-30 Years)."

Another RCET expressed her views on this topic as follows:

"When I hear the term mobbing, I think of pressure, violence, harassment, and causing distress. From this perspective, we can define mobbing as psychological violence. It can also be described as a psychological assault experienced by individuals working in a hierarchical environment, inflicted by their colleagues. In a sense, this term might be more suitable instead of mobbing (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years)."

One of the participants talked about her views on this topic as follows:

"I can describe mobbing as intimidation, a kind of threat. Some people can threaten others in the school so that the ones who are threatened will do what they want (T15, F, P, 21 Years and above, 51 years and above)".

Another participant expressed his opinions on the topic as follows:

"Mobbing means many things-tiredness, discomfort, pressure (T21, M, U, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years)".

When we focus on the RCET's descriptions of mobbing, we can see that the descriptions are categorized into two groups. The first group of descriptions is related with the people who perform mobbing to others. They can be called perpetrators. These people make pressure, perform psychological violence and attack, make implications and frighten and threaten some people. The second group of descriptions is related with the people who are influenced by the act of mobbing. They can be called victims. These people feel distressed, uncomfortable and tired. When we look at the findings, we can see that the RCET have experienced the mobbing while working or they witnessed the mobbing while working. We can say that participants generally used psychological terms to describe mobbing; these terms are generally related with the results of the mobbing in their lives and they have negative meaning, which shows that they are negatively influenced by mobbing process.

When analyzing the responses to the second question of the research, "What are the reasons of mobbing?", RCET have articulated their perceptions regarding the causes of mobbing using the following terms: establishing dominance, jealousy, inadequacy, conflict of interest, power, disrespect, rule-fetishism, and injustice. A table detailing these findings is presented below.

Table 3. The Reasons of Mobbing According to RCET

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Example Sentence
Establishing Dominance	13	40%	"Individuals who see themselves as superior, who cannot accept the success of others, and who desire more as they ascend, have contributed to the emergence of mobbing and related concepts" (T7, M, G, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years).
Jealousy	8	24%	"Employees might not want a colleague who is more successful than themselves; they might be jealous. This can lead to mobbing against that employee" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Inadequacy	4	12%	"Considering the individual, reasons such as jealousy, the desire to be a leader, efforts to establish superiority, and suppressing feelings of inadequacy can be causes of mobbing" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Conflict of Interest	2	6%	"I would say the main reasons include establishing superiority, looking down on others, and conflicts of interest" (T4, M, G, 0-5 Years, 31-40 Years).
Power	2	6%	"In my opinion, it is about showing power, the effort of the strong to crush the weak" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).
Disrespect	2	6%	"I perceive it as a lack of respect for the teaching profession as it used to be" (T12, M, P, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Rule-fetishism	1	3%	"Psychologically speaking, overly rule-focused individuals might also apply mobbing to their colleagues" (T1, M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).
Injustice	1	3%	"The absence of a leader can lead to an unfair environment... and this causes mobbing" (T8, F, G, 21 Years and Above, 51 Years and Above).

One RCET participating in the study expressed his thoughts on the reasons of mobbing as follows:

"I primarily see the lack of respect for the teaching profession as it used to be. Most rules are aimed at shaping teachers' behavior towards students and parents, while the grievances of teachers are less noticed, and sanctions aimed at addressing these issues are fewer. Everyone, including our administrators, parents, and children, tends to use a free style of communication with teachers, causing teachers to feel uncomfortable. The rights of teachers should be more widely recognized, known, and developed. Practices like the previously heard teacher complaint hotline have undermined the teacher's stature in the eyes of parents, leading them to assert themselves whether right or wrong. In school institutions, the principal constantly listens to the parents coming to complain about a teacher in his office, but when a teacher goes to the principal to talk about a student's situation, the solution is often left to the teacher, leaving the teacher unsupported and worn out in such matters (T12, M, P, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years)."

Another RCET shared his views on this topic as follows:

"Mobbing is a process that continues for a certain period. Its continuity can lead to serious social, mental, and psychological problems in the person subjected to mobbing. We can list many reasons under the causes of mobbing. The initial triggering factor is paramount. Bullying, psychological violence, and pressure are among these. When we think about the individual, reasons such as jealousy, the desire to be a leader, efforts to establish dominance, and suppressing feelings of inadequacy can be mentioned as the causes of mobbing (T6, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-50 Years)."

Additionally, another RCET stated:

"I think the main reason for mobbing is jealousy. In addition, the individual's perception of having power due to their position and wanting to make this power felt among their colleagues can also lead to mobbing. Moreover, from a psychological perspective, overly authoritarian individuals can also apply mobbing to their colleagues (T1, M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years)."

One participant says:

"There can be many reasons. However, the most important reason is jealousy (T25, F, U, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years)".

Another participant says:

"The reason may be a conflict of interest or power (T27, M, U, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years)".

When we focus on the reasons of mobbing and expressions of the participants, we can see that most of the reasons are related with personal traits and characteristics. The people who are dominant, jealous, disrespectful to others and the people who feel inadequate, the people who want to show they are superior than others can be the cause of the mobbing. The people who are selfish and unfair, who want to establish superiority over others can cause mobbing. As one participants said, the lack of the leader can result in mobbing. It can also be easily understood that the organizational culture of the schools create an environment in which teachers are exposed to mobbing easily. The stakeholders including school administrators, parents and students contribute to the formation of a school climate in which the teachers are subjected to mobbing. The teachers feel helpless and unprotected, which can damage their psychology.

The researcher then posed the question, "What are the results of mobbing?" Upon analyzing the data, it was found that the RCET participating in the study expressed their opinions on the results of mobbing using terms such as asynchrony, inefficiency, failure, resignation, reluctance, fear-anxiety, stress, aggression-anger, insecurity, health issues, alienation, suicide, weariness, bad habits, and unhappiness. A table summarizing these findings is provided below

Table 4. The Results of Mobbing According to RCET

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Example Sentence
Asynchrony	6	12%	"Interaction among employees at the workplace disappears, leading to asynchronous work" (T1, M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).
Inefficiency	6	12%	"The employee's productivity decreases, affecting the organization, making efficient operation impossible. Happy employees who enjoy their work are successful" (T7, M, G, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years).
Failure	6	12%	"This situation can even hinder the success and future of the organization or company" (T1, M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).
Resignation	6	12%	"Developing negative feelings against the environment, leading to resignation outcomes" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).
Reluctance	4	8%	"Situations like reluctance among employees are consequences of mobbing" (T8, F, G, 21 Years and Above, 51 Years and Above).
Fear - Anxiety	4	8%	"Social burnout, immobility, stress, forgetfulness, anger, fear, decreased desire to live, change in thought are several negative outcomes" (T4, M, G, 0-5 Years, 31-40 years).
Stress	3	6%	"Consequences can include sleep disorders, tension, stress, anger, concentration disruption, anxiety, depression, panic attacks" (T10, M, G, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Aggression - Anger	3	6%	"Damage to an individual's self-confidence, engaging in aggressive activities, increased propensity for crime, psychological deterioration, constant unease, being under stress, and accusing others can lead to many outcomes" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Insecurity	3	6%	"The bond of trust within the organization I'm describing could drop to zero" (T11, M, P, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).

Table 4. Continued

Theme	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)	Example Sentence
Health Issues	2	4%	"It adversely affects life quality and health" (T12, M, P, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Alienation	1	2%	"Detachment and reduction in organizational commitment..." (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).
Suicide	1	2%	"The person subjected to mobbing can experience psychological issues, might quit the job, or engage in harmful behaviors, potentially leading to drastic future consequences like aggression or suicide" (T2, F, P, 16-20 Years, 51 Years and above).
Weariness	1	2%	"Weariness from work, lack of desire to work" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).
Bad Habits	1	2%	"Results also include self-blame, increased smoking and alcohol consumption" (T10, M, G, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Unhappiness	1	2%	"Reluctance, unhappiness" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).

One RCET participating in the study shared her opinions on the consequences of mobbing as follows:

"I believe that the consequences of mobbing will have a lasting and harmful effect on those subjected to it. Individuals affected by mobbing in groups may want to change their jobs to escape the situation. A decline in performance can hinder the progress of the group. The work efficiency of the employees decreases, which could lead to the disintegration of the group. The group dynamics are disrupted. This situation negatively affects both the employees and the leader (T5, F, G, 0-5 Years, 22-30 Years)."

Another RCET expressed the consequences of mobbing with these words:

"In my opinion, there are no positive outcomes of mobbing. Success should not be expected in an environment where pressure, i.e., mobbing, is applied. This is because humans are beings with feelings and emotions, and they perform almost all of their actions and behaviors based on these emotions. If we destroy these emotions through mobbing, that is, if we eliminate the existing motivation, we will not be able to obtain efficiency from the employee. Consequently, the employee's work efficiency decreases, affecting the institution they are part of, and making efficient operation of the institution impossible. Happy employees who enjoy their work are successful in their job fields. Successful job fields mean a successful country. If an employee is subjected to mobbing, the outcome is a failed employee, a failed institution, and a failed country (T7, M, G, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years)."

Another participant's views on this topic are as follows:

"Individuals subjected to mobbing can experience various negative outcomes. The undermining of an individual's self-confidence, engagement in aggressive activities, increased propensity to commit crimes, deterioration of psychological well-being, perpetual state of unease, being under stress, and blaming others are some of the potential consequences. These factors impacting the individual can also affect their job performance and interaction within the group (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years)."

One teacher says:

"There are results of mobbing such as stress, inefficiency, unhappiness (T29, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-50 Years)".

Another teacher says:

"anger and resignation can be the results (T31, M, G, 21 Years and above, 51 Years and above)".

When we focus on the results of mobbing, we can say that it has negative impacts on organizations (schools) and individuals (RCET). For example, mobbing results in asynchrony, inefficiency, failure, and insecurity in terms of school organization, which also have indirect effects on teachers. Moreover, mobbing results in resignation, reluctance, fear-anxiety, stress, aggression-anger, health issues, alienation, suicide, weariness, and unhappiness in terms of RCET, which also have indirect effects on school organization.

The fourth question posed to the RCET participating in the study was, "What should be done to prevent mobbing?" Upon analysis, participants suggested the prevention of mobbing using terms such as support, division of labor-cooperation, job suitability, awareness activities, managerial attributes, relationships and communication, knowledge of legislation and laws, planning, equality, responsibility, trust, problem identification, solution orientation, transparency, and providing education. A table summarizing these findings is provided below.

Table 5. The Suggestions of RCET for the Prevention of Mobbing

Theme	Frequency	Percentage	Example Sentence
Support	4	11.5	"It is important to provide the necessary psychological and social support to prevent employees from being suppressed by managers... Employees should be given enough material and moral support to love their jobs" (T7, M, G, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years).
Division of Labor-Cooperation	4	11.5	"Creating environments according to each individual's work and interest area will prevent them from interfering with their group mates' tasks, thus averting mobbing" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Job Suitability	3	8	"Apart from this, to eliminate mobbing, tasks should be assigned according to employees' talents, and task distributions should be equal" (T4, M, G, 0-5 Years, 31-40 years).
Awareness Activities	3	8	"Measures could include having discussions with experts in the field for individuals thought to be applying mobbing, avoiding work distributions that could lead to pressure among employees, and organizing seminars on mobbing and its consequences" (T1,M, G, 11-15 Years, 41-50).
Managerial Attributes	3	8	"For mobbing to be eradicated, the leader should be able to distinguish right from wrong, be fair, not duplicitous, democratic, caring, investigative, and diplomatic, meeting the needs and desires of the employees" (T2, F, P, 16-20 Years, 51 Years and above)
Relationships and Communication	3	8	"Communication among all employees must certainly be increased" (T8, F, G, 21 Years and Above, 51 Years and Above).
Knowledge of Legislation and Laws	2	6	"Individuals should have prior knowledge about the job and be informed about laws, regulations, and their rights and responsibilities" (T2, F, P, 16-20 Years, 51 Years and above).
Planning	2	6	"I believe that with the management's planning, work and operations will return to normal. After reaching normalcy, I think a bond of trust will form" (T11, M, P, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).
Equality	2	6	"The employer should support all employees by providing equal conditions and opportunities, should not compare them, and must be aware of their responsibilities" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Responsibility	2	6	"Besides the employee, the employer also has responsibilities to bear" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).
Trust	2	6	"We must eliminate whatever causes the issues in the first place. For example, ensuring the creation of the trust we desire in the advice" (T11, M, P, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).
Problem Identification	2	6	"The most common issues can be identified through surveys, and studies addressing these issues can be conducted" (T12, M, P, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Solution Orientation	1	3	"If the presence of mobbing is sensed in an institution, the issue should not be covered up; rather, a solution-oriented approach should be taken" (T7, M, G, 6-10 Years, 22-30 Years).
Transparency	1	3	"The behaviors against the person subjected to mobbing should be clearly stated, and during this conversation, someone should witness, and the incidents experienced, the orders given should be written down..." (T10, M, G, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).
Providing Education	1	3	"People should be well educated not just in schools but at homes, on the streets, at workplaces, everywhere, and conscientious individuals should be nurtured" (T9, M, G, 16-20 Years, 41-Years).
Total	35	100	

One participant expressed her thoughts on the elimination of mobbing as follows:

"I don't believe that mobbing can be permanently eradicated everywhere, but it can gradually be eliminated through mutual dedication from both employees and employers. What can be done? I believe it should start with the individual. That is, by creating environments aligned with each person's work area and interests, preventing them from interfering in their colleagues' tasks, thereby preventing mobbing. Beyond the individual, employers also have responsibilities.

They should provide equal conditions and opportunities for all employees, support them, avoid comparisons, and be aware of their responsibilities" (T3, F, G, 6-10 Years, 22-20 Years).

Another participant shared his views on eliminating mobbing:

"We must first remove whatever causes the issue. For instance, we should ensure the formation of the trust we wish to see in advice. This can start with the administrative staff. I believe that with planned management, work and operations will return to normal. Once normalcy is achieved, a bond of trust will form. Let me mention the schoolyard duties. Planning them according to lesson times will help reduce the teacher's fatigue and enable them to perform their duties correctly. In such a case, the management will not feel the need to engage in mobbing. Similarly, a teacher who manages the class will not encounter issues in lesson planning, and assignments will not overly burden students. I think this will lead to the eradication of mobbing" (T11, M, P, 11-15 Years, 41-50 Years).

Adding to these views, another participant expressed:

"An immediate action plan against mobbing can be implemented. The most common issues can be identified through surveys, and targeted studies can be conducted. Teachers should be approached with respect and value. In this era, not only children or parents should be considered right, but teachers' knowledge, experience, and authority should also be respected. We must give and maintain the respect teachers deserve. As the educators who carry a country to the future, we need to act with this awareness" (T12, M, P, 11-15 Years, 31-40 Years).

One teacher says:

"Everyone should be treated equally by the management; the school climate should be based on trust (T33, F, G, 21 Years and above, 51 Years and above)".

Another teacher says:

"Communication channels should be open; the school administrators should be solution-oriented (T34, M, G, 21 Years and above, 51 years and above)".

When we focus on the RCET's suggestions for mobbing, we can say that their suggestions have implications for both school management and teachers. For example, support, division of labor-cooperation, job suitability, awareness activities, managerial attributes, relationships and communication, planning, equality, responsibility, problem identification (management), solution orientation, and providing education are related to school management. Additionally, knowledge of legislation and laws, responsibility, trust, and transparency are related to teachers.

Discussion

This research was conducted to determine RCET's opinions on the definition of mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing, and their suggestions for preventing mobbing. Primarily, the opinions of the RCET on the definition of mobbing were analyzed. According to the analysis, participants described the concept of mobbing using terms such as pressure, psychological violence, distress, psychological attack, discomfort, implication, exposure, weariness, and intimidation. It was determined that there were few researchers whose results supported the results of this research. For example, Tan et al. (2017) who conducted studies on teachers' perceptions about mobbing, reached similar results to the results of this study. Tan et al. (2017) determined that the teachers defined the concept of mobbing as continuous psychological harassment, oppression, physical violence against employees, emotional abuse, disturbing employees systematically, oppressive control of managers over employees, allusion and humiliation at workplace, a satisfaction tool of people with high ego, negative social pressure, intimidation with no legal and humanitarian grounds and social bullying that group follow. Moreover, in the study done by D'Cruz and Noronha (2021), it was also stated that the Religious Teachers described the concept of mobbing using terms such as distress, implication, tiredness, and physical violence, and they used metaphors for mobbing such as virus attack, madness, abnormality and schizophrenia. Besides, the results of the study, which were conducted by Gentry and Whitley (2014), were in line with the result of this study as they determined that participants used negative terms to describe the concept of mobbing, such as mistreatment, exclusion, aggression, becoming a victim, workplace discrimination, incivilities, public verbal interruptions, overt ignoring, and condescension. Furthermore, in the study undertaken by İçitürk and Turan (2017), the Pre-service Religious Culture and Ethics teachers used metaphors for physical-mental effects of mobbing as disease, schizophrenia, cancer, black death, and nightmare and they used metaphors for the attack on personal rights dimension of mobbing such as rumor, murder, being unfair, being prisoned and moral corruption. As can be seen in different studies (Mikkelsen et al., 2020; Nielsen et al., 2020) that achieved similar results, this result is similar to the results of other studies in the literature (Akbaşlı et al., 2020; Tepebaşılı, 2024).

Regarding the reasons for mobbing, the participants stated that establishing dominance, jealousy, inadequacy, conflict of interest, power, disrespect, rule-fetishism, and injustice were the reasons for mobbing. Studies in the literature support the result of this study. For example, in the study undertaken by Gülcan (2015), the teachers think that they are subjected to mobbing by school administrators (supervisors), parents, teachers (colleagues). 70 % of these teachers think they are subjected to mobbing by school managers while 40 % of these teachers think that they are subjected to

mobbing by parents. Additionally, in Gülcan's (2015) study, the teachers think that bad management of the school administrators (supervisors), personality problems of the supervisors, difficulty of the performed work, bad conditions of the employees, working under intensive stress, insufficiency of communication between the school administrators and teachers, the school administrators' not believing in the existence of mobbing were the reasons of mobbing. Again, in the study conducted by C. De Wet (2014), it was determined that workplace mobbing resulted from relational powerlessness and organizational chaos. C. De Wet (2014) also found that the relationally powerless, namely, those whose situational and contextual characteristics did not fit in, were vulnerable to mobbing and mobbing was likely to occur in schools which were characterized by incompetent, unprincipled, abusive leadership, a lack of accountability, fairness and transparency. Moreover, Zapf and Einarsen (2003) found that the bullies who had a lack of social skills, threatened self-esteem, politically-motivated behaviors, and the existence of an organization which had a lack of formal structures, clearly divided work tasks and responsibilities were the reasons of mobbing. Furthermore, Riley et al. (2011) revealed that personal confrontation, diminished professional standing, workload, and work conditions and environment resulted in mobbing. In many studies in the literature, the reasons of mobbing seemed to be in line with the results of this research (Erkoyuncu, 2023; Kavlak & Yıldırım, 2021; Tekşen, 2023).

In relation to the results of mobbing, the participants thought that asynchrony, inefficiency, failure, resignation, reluctance, fear-anxiety, stress, aggression-anger, insecurity, health issues, alienation, suicide, weariness, bad habits, and unhappiness were the results of mobbing. Studies in the literature support the result of this study. For example, in the study undertaken by Thomas (2017), all of the teachers described similar symptoms with declining health such as depression, fear, stress, high blood pressure and anxiety due to their experiences with mobbing from the administrators. In Thomas' (2017) study, the physical and mental health of each participant collectively suffered and they had alcohol abuse and low self-esteem due to mobbing. Additionally, in Thomas' (2017) study, the teachers explained that the mistreatment affected their ability to teach students because many of the teachers lived in constant fear of their administrators' mistreatment, they could not function to do their jobs properly. Thomas (2017) concluded that the mobbing experienced by teachers decreased their participation in committing to their job duties. The results of this research are also confirmed by the research conducted by N. C. De Wet (2010). In her study on principal-on-educator mobbing, N. C. De Wet found that educators, who were victimized by their principals, suffered from depression, headaches, sleep deprivation, stress, and burnout. Similarly, according to De Vos and Kirsten's study (2015), the teachers, who were victimized, reported experiences of poor health and ultimately left the profession and the teachers who participated in their study reported that experiences with workplace bullying altered relationships with their spouses and children (De Vos & Kirsten, 2015). Furthermore, Tınaz (2006) revealed that a decline in the value of organizational culture, negative organizational climate, limited creativity due to an insecure environment, conflict between individual employees, a high number of resignations and low job performance were the results of mobbing. The results of this study were also supported by the previous researches (Gülmez, 2022; Şengül et al., 2023).

In relation to the opinions of teachers on the suggestions for preventing mobbing, participants suggested the prevention of mobbing using terms such as support, division of labor-cooperation, job suitability, awareness activities, managerial attributes, relationships and communication, knowledge of legislation and laws, planning, equality, responsibility, trust, problem identification, solution orientation, transparency, and providing education. When the literature is analyzed, the studies that provide suggestions for preventing mobbing have been found. In his research, Thomas (2017) suggested that the teachers should become familiar with the laws and organizational policies associated with workplace mistreatment and the ways to take individual and collective action against workplace mobbing and he also suggested that professional learning communities consisting of school and district level administrators should be created and be responsible for researching and reviewing studies on the issue of teacher mistreatment and mobbing led by workplace bullying experts. Additionally, Gülcan (2015) suggested guidance and support mechanisms such as denouncing to the respective bodies and claiming rights need to be established in order to preserve the rights of the teachers who are subjected to mobbing. Moreover, Akbaşlı et al. (2020) recommended that school administrators should create an environment that will encourage employees to work efficiently, take responsibility, take action to solve problems. Bulut and Hihi (2021) recommended establishing policies that contain anti-bullying acts in the workplace and training the employees to raise awareness toward bullying. Kavlak and Yıldırım (2021) recommended that the school administrators should exhibit ethical leadership behaviors, treat all the stakeholders fairly and equally and be aware of their responsibilities.

Conclusion

The number of studies on opinions of RCET on mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing, and suggestions for the prevention of mobbing is very low. Therefore, it is important to analyze mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing, and suggestions for the prevention of mobbing according to the perspectives of these teachers. It was aimed to determine mobbing, the reasons and results of mobbing, and suggestions for the prevention of mobbing. The following results are obtained in the study: (1) Participants defined the concept of mobbing using terms such as pressure, violence, distress, attack, discomfort, implication, exposure, weariness, and intimidation. (2) It was found that establishing dominance, jealousy, inadequacy, conflict of interest, power, disrespect, rule fetishism, and injustice were the reasons of mobbing according to the opinions of the participants. (3) The participants thought that asynchrony, inefficiency, failure, resignation, reluctance, fear-anxiety, stress, aggression-anger, mistrust, health issues, problems,

alienation, suicide, weariness, bad habits, and unhappiness were the results of mobbing. (4) The participants suggested solutions such as support, awareness activities, relationships and communication, knowledge of legislation and laws, equality, responsibility, trust, problem identification, solution orientation, and providing education. Considering the mobbing, the causes and results of these mobbing, and suggestions for mobbing, the following can be stated for the research results; mobbing occurs in schools and the RCET are also influenced by and subjected to mobbing; mobbing negatively influences RCET in terms of their psychology, work performance and health; therefore all of the stakeholders should cooperate and help each other to prevent mobbing; especially school administrators and teachers should be proactive in identifying and preventing potential problems of mobbing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be formulated for practitioners:

- The curriculum of education faculties should more effectively address topics such as the definition, structure, social, economic, and legal aspects of mobbing within the school experience courses for teacher candidates; awareness and sensitivity towards mobbing should be enhanced during the pre-service training processes.
- Regulations should be adjusted to emphasize merit-based criteria in appointments to managerial positions; the existing examination system for school principal appointments should utilize evaluations that measure not only cognitive but also emotional competencies.
- Unions operating in the education sector should act in the interests of educators in a neutral manner, avoiding roles that involve gaining advantage, taking sides, or creating pressure.
- Variations in practices within schools, such as the allocation of days off for teachers, can influence the perception of schools. Therefore, it is essential to ensure uniformity of application in accordance with the regulations.
- Maintaining open communication channels between school administrators and teachers and organizing social activities that will strengthen communication is crucial.
- The development of in-service training programs that will enhance teachers' self-perception and increase their self-awareness through training provided by experts in the field is recommended.
- Legal sanctions against personnel who engage in mobbing should be intensified, and effective justice mechanisms should be established where victims can seek their rights and submit their complaints.

Recommendations for researchers can be outlined as follows:

- This study was conducted with a qualitative approach. Employing quantitative methodologies could provide more detailed and varied information on the subject.
- Research on mobbing incidents in schools has predominantly examined the perspective of teachers. Increasing studies focusing on school administrators can facilitate obtaining more comprehensive information about different aspects of mobbing.
- Investigating the relationship of mobbing cases with different disciplines such as educational sciences, communication, politics, and sociology can provide a multifaceted perspective on the topic.

Limitations

The basic limitations of this research are that the study was designed in a single province, Mersin, with a limited sample group and only with the qualitative design. The sample group consisted of only 35 RCET. The data obtained from this study can't be easily generalized to all of the RCETs in Turkey. The data was collected with a certain semi-structured interview form, which only included 5 questions; the number of questions could also create a limitation. The research had a qualitative design, which could provide more limited data compared to a mixed-type research design. The field survey of this research was carried out in the 2023-2024 academic year. The research is limited in these aspects.

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