The Investigation of Mobbing Events Taking Place at Higher Education Institutions in Turkey Considering the Reflections on Media

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Abstract: *The business-life related competition established in modern communities has also brought about some other problems. The attacks and intimidation attempts have introduced the term of "mobbing" which is defined as regular and continuous psychological violence faced by people always trying to produce and win from those who they work with. The term of "mobbing" has recently become a popular academic issue which has been sophisticatedly handled in relevant literature. Mobbing is defined as the act of continuous and systematic intimidation purposefully performed by either some employees or employers on some employees through emotional violence. As mobbing is considered to be significant for both corporate and employee, the starting point of this study was to investigate how mobbing acts are reflected on newspapers as they are mass communication means. One of the most important means of media is print media. Print media is the first means of media when mentioned about media. Newspapers are means through which people are always kept up to date about the latest news in civilized societies. With this regard, the most basic purpose of this study is to investigate the news about the mobbing events experienced in higher education system under the light of national policy documents and reports. The study was carried out based on a qualitative approach. The news released in print media was chosen purposefully as print media means report news in a detailed way, have an evidential value and can be read again on demand. The research group in this study consists of the mobbing news released on Hurriyet, Sabah and Zaman which are newspapers published in Turkey between the years of 2009-2013. These newspapers were purposefully chosen based on criterion sampling method. The most basic understanding underlying this sampling method is to study on all cases which meet the standards set prior to the start of the study. The newspapers mentioned above were chosen considering that they are*

published nationally, reference newspapers and belong to different publication groups. The data used in this study was taken from the archive of the three newspapers. When the archives of the newspapers was scanned, the word "mobbing" was taken as key word for the search. In qualitative researches, newspapers are considered to be public archive and used as reference documents. The data obtained was grouped depending on the newspapers which it was taken from, on the year of publication, on where they took place, on the gender of the victims and on who the sufferers are.

Introduction

Violence has always existed where human being exists. The desire of human being for controlling and dominating the environment, has caused violence, fights and wars through the history. Whereas violence has been revealing itself in different forms, and the acts aiming to frighten, pressure, oppressing, killing, dissuading and intimidating vary from society to society, it has been existing in every county as part of daily life. Violence is a social problem and an ugly truth which has been a common cause of fights or consequences of the fights through the history. Violence appears in various forms such as emotional, physical and psychological depending on the content and form. Although its form and contents are different, there is an agreement on that violence causes some harms on individuals. World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as the intentional employment of force of the threat of using force over other people or other groups of people which in time may result in injury, death, psychological damage, retarded development or negligence (World Health Organization, 1996). The lexical meaning of violence contains every type of material and nonmaterial negativeness against human's physical and psychological wellbeing. The strength and aggression are the two concepts at the core of this negativeness. All words uttered when violence is used, approaches, attitudes, acts, physical and mental effects as well as the use of force in an act of violence are all considered to be very significant. Any act in violence is considered to be mobbing act. The term of "mobbing" was first used by Konrad Lorenz, an Australian scientist investigating animal behaviours, in 1960s to describe the activities of animals performed to frighten away their predators or any foreign animals. About 20 years later, Heinz Leyman observed similar behaviour on employees, and started to use the term of "mobbing" to define the severity of the violence among the employees in workplaces (Davenport, Schwartz & Elliott, 2003). Mobbing is a psychological terror systematically performed by a few people in a workplace on another person through the use of hostile and immoral ways of communication (Leymann, 1990, 1996).

The term of "mobbing" comes from the root of "mob" in English. "Mob" is defined as hesitant crowd and community tended towards violence. "Mobbing" lexically means siege, attacking all together or gripping. "Mobbing" as a term is related to the following words, such as emotional outrage/harassment, psychological violence, intimidating, pressure, siege,

psychological terror. When "mobbing" is introduced in Turkey, the terms which are most commonly preferred to define it are emotional violence in workplace, emotional harassment, emotional terror, psychological violence, workplace trauma, bullying in workplace, intimidation and etc. (Çobanoğlu, 2005). Tınaz (2006) defines the term "mobbing" as siege, harassment and disturbance or gripping. The term contains the following meanings, such as every type of ill-treatment systematically performed by their subordinates or the co-workers at equivalent position in the workplace on some employees, through treat, violence, humiliation, etc.

International Labour Organization (ILO) extends the definition of violence in workplace in its report released in 2000 so that it would cover passive and psychological behaviours as well as physical behaviours. These behaviours which are defined to be violence in workplaces are murder, rape, robbery, gun shooting, beating, physical attack, kicking, biting, punching, spitting, scratching, oppressing, snakingly approaching, harassment related to religion and race and bullying. Mobbing is baiting, aggrieving, intimidating, threatening, deporting, leaving disturbing messages, rude behaviours, obstructiveness related to the access to job-related tools and equipment, hostile behaviours, swearing, screaming, giving a nickname, intentional silence, indirect implicitness.

The qualifications of workplaces in today's world are very effective for an operational work life. "Mobbing" is the fastest growing form of violence in workplace. In such form of violence, the person who mobs or mobbing group exhibits some behaviour to those who are skilful to perform their jobs better to make the work environment an insufferable place. These behaviours are observed hierarchically and functionally. In hierarchical psychological intimidation, top directors exhibit some bullying behaviours to their subordinates, but in functional psychological intimidation, there are intimidating behaviours among the people who have no superior-subordinate relationships. The reason for hierarchical psychological intimidation is suggested to be threats towards their social image, age difference, favouring and political factors, but rivalry, coming from a different geographical region (city, region) and racism are suggested for functional psychological intimidation (Tınaz, 2006). Mobbing, which is an intentional, systematic and effective act of intimidating the person being exposed to the attack, contains a series of teasing which may lead to the dismiss of the victim creating a nervy atmosphere in the workplace (Alparslan & Tunç, 2009).

There are five noticeable characteristics of mobbing process (Einarsen, 2000; Vartia, 2003; Özler, Giderler-Atalay & Dil-Şahin, 2008):

- Mobbing consists of continuous hostile behaviours in a certain time period.
- There is a power unbalance between the victim and the person performing the mobbing.
- It may be between two people, between one single person and a group or between groups.
- Hostile behaviours are exhibited strategically and consciously.
- Mobbing process includes some physical attacks.

If the causes of mobbing are specifically detailed, it can be defined as follows; forcing individuals to stick to the group norms; enjoying hostile behaviours, having fun of the victim's psychological and physical pain; getting rid of boredom, encouraging favouritism, standing by those with power for self-interest, trying to make up for personal deficit and weakness, behaving selfishly, having some narcissist personal characteristics, having misguided social instinct (Yaman, 2009). When the causes of mobbing performed by institutions are investigated, the most remarkable one is the use of mobbing as a strategy. At the stages when corporate decide on degrowth, adaptation or structural changes, the employees who are considered to be useless for the corporate no more are strategically forced to leave their jobs without entering any obligation (Altuntaş, 2010).

The causes of mobbing reported from Universities are suggested as follows (Yıldırım &Yıldırım, 2010):

- There is a competition for the share of sources within the corporate or out of the corporate.
- There is an over hierarchical structure.
- Lack of enough advancement opportunities triggers the competitive structure.
- Having a lot of formality increases the risk.
- Achievements are treated unfairly.
- Excessive and unfair workload distribution may exist.
- There may be targets difficult to reach.

Media is a factor whose effect have been continuously increasing by time, it is very significant with regards to the sources of the violence.

Media and Violence

Media includes every type of communication tools used as a means of mass communication. All visual and print materials, such as radio, TV, VCD, floppy disk, video, and cinema are defined as media and play significant roles in mass communication. Media is a significant means of shaping our acts and way of understanding and socializing people (Ayrancı, Köşgeroğlu & Günay, 2004). Mass communication tools are potential means of effect, control and novelty, and they are also sources and transmitters of knowledge necessary for most society to function

properly (McQuail & Windahl, 1997). Media can be summed up as book, newspaper, magazine, computer, television, internet, video games, music, film, CD-ROM, DVD, pager phone, mobile phones and billboards, and all print and digital tools can be considered to be part of media (Kıncal & Kartal, 2009). Media organs which are significant tools for keeping the society up to date, inform the society in one side and present us a new world and some images and pictures related to that world in other side. In other words, it guides us telling how we should perceive the world, imposes us some attitudes and behaviours. It may play a very determinant role in our life (Palabıyıkoğlu, 1997).

Mass communication tools have become one of the most basic elements in our society. UNESCO which suggests mass communication to be a significant element of thought, data communication and exchange as well as exchange of messages, lists the functions of mass communication in its report namely "communication and Society" as follows:

Providing news and Information: Mass communication means reports news and information to help people make up their mind on certain subjects and levelly comprehend individual, social and international issues.

Socialization: Mass communication means helps individuals socialize to sustain their existence in the community. Moral and material elements of a society are reported to the individuals of a society through mass communication means, and they are also helped to learn such issues.

Motivation: Mass communication means encourages communities fulfil their social targets. As in the lives of individuals in a society, they contribute to the fulfilment of these targets.

Discussion and Dialogue: Mass communication means establish an appropriate discussion settings, and they also contribute to an agreement through dialogue as well as revealing some public problems. Through mass communication tools, every organ of a society is encouraged to take part in discussion about national and international issues, and the best solution is found

Educational Function: As mass communication means report information and news, they also help to educate the individuals in a society. Mass communication tools also play significant roles in improving individuals' skills and talents.

The Function of Cultural Improvement: Mass communication tools also play a significant role in the conservation of historical heritage as well as spreading artistic pieces, and thus contribute to the improvement of the culture.

Entertaining Function: Mass communication tools provide individuals with opportunities for entertainment as well as education and culture.

Function of Integration: Mass communication means play a significant role in helping communities come close to one another as well as helping individuals get to know one another in a community. Mass communication tools also contribute to the principle of living together with all dissimilarities we have (Özkan, 2006).

When the contents and functions of education and media are examined, it is seen that there are some matching contents and functions. Education is defined as a process through which intended and purposeful habit changing is done. However, education cannot be defined as only pedagogical change of habits. Education is a social asset with multidimensional functions. Press cannot also be defined as a means of only news and comments. Media as a term means the tool connecting masses of people and fastening them to one another when its root and lexical meaning is considered. It is seen as an effective social institution in socializing people, shaping individuals' behaviours and attitudes in the society (Erkılıç, 2008).

One of the most significant tools of media is print media. Newspapers are the first print tools that we remember about print media. Newspapers are tools through which civilized communities care much about and they are kept informed about local and global events. Press which is one of the most significant power stations in a community, mediates for building good public relations (Altun & Kirkit, 2005). Media is a tool whose power cannot be denied with regards to reporting up to date events in the world, enlightening, informing and disillusioning people. In literature, another dimension in which media and violence relationship is discussed, is about how the news containing violence and crime elements which we need to be careful about, should be processed considering how strong media is in moulding public opinion. Since, media's way of reporting news raises people's interest in some subjects and increases their awareness, and they play effective roles in establishing new judgements about new concepts (Menifield et al., 2001). In relevant literature, it is discussed that there are significant differences between the reflection of the news about the violence and abundance of violence on media and findings of scientific studies. As Rodgers and Thorson (2001) suggest, whereas some violence events are very common, they are not reported on media, but some minor violence events are depicted more often considering that they will increase the sales and ratings. The presentation of violence in media in such a sensationalizing way causes people to adapt misjudgements about violence and the variables related to the violence in the society. The investigation of way of reporting news with violence content and its effects on society is extremely important to prevent violence and achievement of treatment attempts as people's points of view that they have adapted for violence or the meanings that they have attributed to violence are closely related to media in a society. Therefore, how violence contents are reported in print media which is considered to be one of the most effective instruments for feedback about the system, provide information and establish public structure. The media analysis investigating how people are informed about the issues mentioned above are very important for every discipline looking for solution to violence.

The Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the news in print media about higher education system through national policy documents and reports. In this study, the contents of the news about "mobbing", their distribution by years, the ways of reflecting them on media will be examined in detail. It is aimed to make clear the dynamics of the events with violence content at higher education institutions, the period of times when violence most often encountered, the settings where violence often appears and the causes for violence under sub-purposes. Answers are looked for the following research questions in this study.
1- What is the distribution of mobbing events at higher education institutions depending on year and newspapers?
2- How is the distribution of mobbing events depending on the social institutions where violence happens?
3- What is the distribution of the news released in newspapers depending on the parties of the event?

Method

Research Group

The sampling of the study consists of the news released on Hurriyet, Sabah and Zaman between the years 2009 and 2013. These newspapers were intentionally chosen depending criterion sampling method. The main understanding underlying this understanding is to study on all cases meeting the standards set prior to the study. The criterion mentioned here or criteria can be generated by the researcher or a list of criteria developed before, can be used (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The newspapers mentioned above were chosen considering that they are published nationally, reference newspapers and belong to different publication groups. The data used in this study was taken from the archive of the three newspapers.

Data Collection

The data used in this study was obtained through the scanning of the news released on Hurriyet, Sabah and Zaman about the violence at higher education institutions between the dates January the 1st and December 31st. The data was obtained from the web sites of the three newspapers. Patton (2002) suggests that data needs to be collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation and documents in qualitative researches. Berg (2007) considers newspapers as public archive and suggest them to be used as documents in qualitative researches.

Data Analysis

In this study in which how violence events at higher education institutions are reflected on media is examined, document review technique was used. Document review analysis involves analysis of the print materials presenting information about the target events to be investigated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The news texts which were released on Hurriyet, Sabah and Zaman, and whose main focus is the violence at schools are the resources of this study to gather data from. However, it was the main purpose in the choice of the news that the violence needs to take place at institutions. Digitising of the qualitative data is a technique often used. The contents of the news directed the research at the stages of data analysis and discussion of the findings.

In the study which was carried out by Yar (2013) to reveal the level of mobbing that academicians in Turkey suffer from at higher education institutions, the causes of mobbing, its consequences and the permanent effects on victims, it was found that academicians experience mobbing because of jealousy in administrative and academic issues, gossip and mismatch in political views.

Results and Discussion

The findings were obtained through the analysis of the news texts on the newspapers which were chosen as targets of this study. Firstly, the distribution of mobbing events experienced at various institutions in the society depending on years of occurrence is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of mobbing events by year and newspaper

Name of the newspaper	2009	2010	2011	2012	2103	Total
Hurriyet	8	11	41	41	52	153
Zaman	2	5	19	16	32	74
Sabah	2	10	29	32	35	108
Total	12	26	89	89	119	

When Table 1 was examined, it is seen that the number of mobbing news is 153 in Hurriyet, 74 in Zaman, 108 in Sabah, and the total number of mobbing news in three newspaper is 335 between the years of 2009 and 2013. What is attention taking is that Hurriyet is the newspaper with the highest number of mobbing news. When the distribution is taken into consideration, 2013 was found to be the year when the highest number of mobbing news texts were released on three newspapers.

Table 2. Distribution of mobbing events depending on the institutions where they took place

Public Institute	Name of the Newspaper		
	Hurriyet	Sabah	Zaman
University	45	21	12
Health Institute	11	5	5
Private Sector	22	13	11

When Table 2 was examined, it was found that 88 mobbing related news texts were reported at universities, 21 mobbing news at health institutions, 46 news at private sectors. Mobbing events were found to take place at universities which are higher education institutions. One of the news texts about mobbing events at universities was released in Sabah on 04-11-2011, and the heading was "5-year prison sentence to the dean mobbing" "Xxx University, the Dean of Faculty of Law Prof. Dr. X, Assist. Prof. Dr. A was sentenced to 5-month prison for mobbing malpracticing".

The news can be summed up as "A. filed a criminal complaint accusing X of preventing neither negative nor positive decision issuing in an executive meeting in which application for the congress was debated. A. also claimed that that is against the law of Board of Higher Education. Council of State reminded that every member of the executive meeting is supposed to vote for either "affirmative vote" or "black ball", and decided that "abstaining vote" of "X" is against 61. Article of Board of Higher Education. In response to that decision, A. went to law for "malpractice", and X was sentenced to 5-month prison. A. had been sentenced to pay 3000 TL indemnification to X for mobbing before."

There was also another news text in Zaman on March 9,2012 "mobbing claim from a security guard to the rector" " X, a security guard working at Y university, filed a claim for Rector Prof. Dr A. accusing him of mobbing in workplace". Another news released in Zaman on 12-08-2011 is "mobbing events being exposed at public institutions exceeded those in private sector in number" "According to the report of the committee on equality of opportunity for women and men; those who work at public sector are exposed to more mobbing events than those in private sector. Mobbing at workplace which has become a nightmare for employees, was found to be more common in public sector than that on private sector" "the person who is vice president of Association of Fight Against Mobbing stated that great majority of the people who apply to the association claiming that they have been victims of mobbing are public officers and went on suggesting that those who are victims of mobbing from their superior or co-workers suffer from mental problems and driven to suicide. Therefore, the vice president pointed out that there is a need for an urgent legal regulation protecting employees from mobbing". This news seems to be in parallel with the findings of this study.

Table 3. Distribution of mobbing news released in newspapers depending on parties

The parties of the mobbing event	Name of the newspaper		
	Hurriyet	Sabah	Zaman
Director-Employee	36	15	23
Employee-Employee	21	8	13

When Table 3 was examined, considering the news released in newspapers, 74 mobbing events were found to be between director and employee, 43 events were between employee and employee. It is clear that mobbing is most often seen between directors and employees. A news text about mobbing on Hurriyet on 17-02-2012 suggests "A. Who has been working at XXX University as a technician, filed a claim to the Izmir 5.

Civil Court of Peace through his lawyer and claimed that Dean Prof. Dr Y. has been continuously humiliating himself and mobbing him in workplace". There is another news text in Hurriyet on 13-02-2012 which is "mobbing case to Prof". The detail of the news is as follows: "A. who has been working as a nurse in Adana for 24 years filed a claim about prof. Dr. B., Romatology-Immunology department at Z University, Faculty of Medicine."

Table 4. Distribution of mobbing news released in newspapers depending on the gender of victims

Gender	Name of the Newspaper		
	Hurriyet	Sabah	Zaman
Female	42	13	21
Male	11	4	9

When Table 4 was examined, it is seen that 76 news were found to be about the women mobbing victims, 24 news texts were about male victims of mobbing. When the news texts released in newspapers were examined, the number of women victims of mobbing is more than that of men. The headline on Zaman newspaper on 02-04-2013 states "mobbing is a nightmare for a working woman", "Women's branch head of Y party, XX stated that "mobbing has been a nightmare for working women. Working women who are exposed to insult, sometimes humiliation are both physiologically and psychologically affected from the mobbing and women are moved away from work life". As pointed out in the content of the news reported above, it is clear that women are more exposed to mobbing than that of men. As an example for women's mobbing experience, the following headline released in Sabah on 18-01-2011 can be given; "6000tl capital punishment to the boss who insults his employee as "hungry dog". N.K who was exposed to the insult of her boss filed a claim, was found to be right by the court and mobbing term was used in the reasoned decision. Lawyers stated that this is the first time that mobbing term is used in a court decision."

Result, Discussion and Suggestion

Mass communication means are the most effective tools facilitating the exchange of information, thoughts and views, social organization, moulding public opinion, meeting the most basic need of human being such as education, improving human relationships, spreading new attitudes and behaviours, views and movement of thoughts.

In this study which aimed to investigate the mobbing events at higher education institutions through the news texts released in newspapers, the archive scan suggests that Hurriyet is the newspaper which most often reports news about mobbing, Zaman was found to be the newspaper with the least news about mobbing. In the study, namely "Mobbing fact in media and its reflections" carried out by Şahin and Sarı (2009), similar findings were obtained. The mobbing related news was found to be the most commonly reported in Hurriyet (44.8%), and the least was found to be in Zaman (10.03%). The archive scan of three newspapers, Hurriyet,

Sabah and Zaman between the years of 2009-2013 reveals that 2013 was found to be the year when the highest number of mobbing news texts were released in newspapers. When the news texts were examined on the newspapers with regards to the language used in the texts, it was found that more than half of the news was reported without any comments. The news texts which preferred to use a condemnatory language, were found to be the news with sexual violence content. It is seen that the news texts prefer to employ an informative, alleging and condemnatory language (Altun, Güneri & Baker, 2006). As the frequency of mobbing related news reported in newspapers gets higher at higher education institutions, readers may have more concern about the security risks at higher education institutions. Mobbing is generally closely related to physical violence in society. When we examine the mobbing type which find the biggest place in print media, physical violence comes the first. That the news with sexual violence content is lower in number can be suggested to result from the fact that our society considers such issues as taboos. It can be concluded that the mobbing experienced between superior and employee is much more common than that of between employee and employee at institutions.

Suggestions

⇨ A special care should be given to the language used in newspaper news. When news contents are prepared, help may be demanded from various field experts and the language used can be made very objective.
⇨ Necessary precautions need to be taken as soon as possible without making any discrimination when individuals are exposed to any misbehaviour.
⇨ This study is limited to only print media. Further studies can be carried out on how visual media reports news with mobbing content at higher education institutions, on background of news, degree of accuracy, on if there is any negligence in the report of the news with mobbing content. Thus, a clear picture of media can be taken.

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