Research Article

The Predictive Relationships between the Values of University Employees, Mobbing, and Organizational Commitment

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to reveal the explanatory and predictive relationship between academicians' values, mobbing, and organizational commitments, on the one hand, and to test a model that originated from these relationships, on the other. A relational survey was applied to determine the relationship between two or more variables and obtain clues regarding their cause and effect relationship. The study's working group was composed of 512 academicians currently working at a university. In the study, The Values Scale developed by Schwartz, The Mobbing Scale developed by Yaman, and The Organizational Commitment scale developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith were utilized. Analyses of the study performed according to the structural equation model using AMOS 16 software. Structural equation modeling is a statistical approach used to test a theoretical model that presents the causal relationships between latent variables. The study's findings revealed that values are statistically meaningful predictors of mobbing and organizational commitment. According to the results, the values of power, success, hedonism, excitement, self-regulation, universality, humanity, conventionalism, conformity, and security, have a positive impact on both mobbing and organizational commitment.

Keywords

Values • University employees • Mobbing • Organizational commitment

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Various definitions of the term "value" exist in academic literature. For instance, Kohlberg (1981) interprets the concept of value as "deciding morally and behaving accordingly." Hill (1991), however, explains the same concept as "the prioritized beliefs of individuals that guide their lives," and Veugelers (2000) paraphrases the same term as "the opinion that decides whether something is good or bad." Morrow (1989), who approaches the term value from a different viewpoint, argues that values should be considered rules and principles. According to Morrow, values have the same meaning as the rules and principles of a society. Halstead and Taylor (1996) interpret the term value as "knowledge and principles guiding our behaviors; standards used to determine whether something is good or bad." Thomas (2002) defines values as "thoughts which are not confirmed by the society, but which are accepted by people as personal beliefs." Values are interpreted differently in different parts of the world. As a matter of fact, according to Birch and Rasmussen (1989), norms and cultures are social rules that emerge in certain societies. Since values, defined as subjective perceptions, differ from society to society (Zajda, 2009), these rules cannot be the same in every society (Fataar & Solomons, 2011). Winter, Newton, and Kirkpatrick (1998) mention three different value categories: social values, personal values, and familial values. On the other hand, Cohen (1985) proposes five categories of values: intrinsic, extrinsic, personal, moral, and knowledge-based values. According to Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966), values are notionally defined as behaviors and beliefs done proudly by the individual. Every person has deeply internalized values that s/he has adopted unconsciously (Hanssona, Carey, & Kjartansson, 2010). Values direct and organize our lives. They are involved in the cognitive, affective, and behavioral sides of our attitudes (Powney et al., 1995).

Kluckhohn examines values from a social perspective. For him, values are the means used to attain one's longings and desires. The intercommunal aspect, another definition for society, expresses values as a series of beliefs or cross-cultural priorities that usually have a connection with social conditions, objectives, and events (Gari, Mylonasa, & Karagianni, 2005). As previously mentioned, values are individuals' choices. Since society is a result of individuals gathering together, and since anything held as important by an individual is considered a value, anything held to be important for a society is considered a value as well. Values are also more than simple beliefs. Believing something means obeying the behavior of that belief. However, establishing such a connection can be hard. While obeying any particular value, one must also fit into the environment in which that value is held. Thus, as per Pring (1984), a behavior can only be applied as long as the society holds it suitable to do so. Another concept mentioned in this study is that of "mobbing." Mobbing first entered the academic literature as a term in 1973 when Heinemann associated the aggressive behaviors of a group of children over someone with those of animals and birds, using the very term coined by Lorenz in the 1960s for animals (Thompson, Arora, & Sharp, 2002). The same term started to be used frequently in the business world beginning in the early 1980s.

Mobbing means to push someone both systematically and continuously into a helpless and defenseless position as a result of ethically unacceptable and hostile communication by either a single or a group of individuals (Leymann, 1996). Mobbing is a tyrant's constant and relentless attack on his victim's self-confidence and self-respect (Field, 1996), and this term includes all of the negative behaviors in a workplace (Namie & Namie, 2003). Disturbing someone intentionally and repetitively are common points of mobbing definitions (Einarsen, 2000). On the other hand, Leymann (1993) talks about the four different factors that contribute to pressure/mobbing in the workplace (as cited in Einarsen, 1999). These are: the inadequacy of a study plan, the inadequacy of leadership behaviors, the victim's defenselessness, and the inadequacy of moral standards. People who apply mobbing generally try to have their own way and control everything by applying inhuman treatments and using immoral strategies such as pressure, suppression, intimidation, sabotage, and psychological terrorism in the workplace environment to compensate for their own personal and administrative deficiencies. The reflection of mobbing on an organization's members may manifest in the form of exclusion, harassment, sexual harassment, abuse, maltreatment, communicative obstacles, giving no assignments, overburden or underburden, proscription, self-righteousness and scorning workers, misinformation, blocking knowledge sharing, exploiting of workers, humiliation, and insult (Yaman, 2009).

Another term referred to in this study is "organizational commitment." Organizational commitment is a frequently used term in the relevant literature (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Becker, 1960; Brown, 1996; Herscovitch & Meyer, 2002; Kanter, 1968; O'Reilly & Caldwell, 1981; Salancik, 1977). Organizational commitment can be described as a concept that tries to explain the attitudes and behaviors of an individual toward his/her work (Mathews & Shepherd, 2002); the emotional responses of someone toward his work (Cook & Wall, 1980); and the psychological connection of an individual to the organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986). According to Loke (2001), organizational commitment is a behavioral sign of a worker's intention and attitude to his work and organization.

Three types of commitment can be identified as: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). These are generally regarded as the elements of commitment. In this context, workers experience the psychological effects of each of these elements in the workplace (Wasti, 2003). In organizational commitment, believing and accepting the aims and values of the organization, voluntarily devoting oneself on behalf of the organization, and displaying a strong will to remain a member of the organization are the chief points (Swailes, 2002). The fact that workers who show loyalty to the organization are more productive, more loyal, and more responsible is a well-known phenomenon (Balay, 2000). Hence, factors such as including the workers in the corporate decision-making process and providing

corporate job security enhance commitment (Moorhead & Griffin, 1992). On the other hand, research findings prove that organizational commitment is affected largely by such corporate factors as leadership, culture, values, and norms (Sagie, 1998). In this regard, the purpose of this study is to reveal the explanatory and predictive relationship between academicians' values, mobbing, and organizational commitments, on the one hand, and to test a model that originated from these relationships, on the other.

The hypothesis that took place in the study is as follows:

H1: Values are a meaningful predictor of mobbing.

H2: Values are a meaningful predictor of organizational commitment.

H3: Organizational commitment is a meaningful predictor of mobbing.

Method

Study Group

The study group consists of 512 university employees at a public university in Konya. The study group was selected by using convenience sampling strategy from six different faculties.

Data Collection Tool

Schwartz's Values Inventory: The Values Inventory was developed by Schwartz (1992). The Schwartz Values Inventory consists of 57 value expressions and ten dimensions (Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). It was adapted into Turkish by Kuşdil and Kağıtçıbaşı (2000) with the support of three social psychology experts. In the study by Kuşdil and Kağıtçıbaşı, the reliability coefficients of the value types ranged between .51 and .77, and those of the value groups ranged between .77 and .83. These coefficients were .77 for universalism, .76 for benevolence, .54 for hedonism, .75 for power, .66 for achievement, .70 for stimulation, .69 for self-direction, .63 for tradition, .51 for conformity, and .59 for security. Moreover, the internal consistency results of the main value groups were as follows: .80 for conservation, .81 for openness to change, .81 for self-transcendence, and .84 for self-enhancement.

Mobbing Scale. Consisting of 23 items and 4 sub-dimensions, the Mobbing Scale was developed by Yaman (2010). These sub-dimensions are humiliation, discrimination, sexual harassment, and communicative obstacles. The factor load of the scale differs from .77 to .91. The reliability coefficients for internal consistency are as follows: .91 for humiliation, .77 for discrimination, .79 for sexual harassment, and .79 for communicative obstacles. The test-retest reliability coefficients are: .91 for humiliation,

.78 for discrimination, .82 for sexual harassment, and .82 for communicative obstacles. Item analyses showed that Item-total score correlations varied between .54 and .78.

Organizational Commitment Scale. Consisting of 18 items and 3 sub-dimensions, The Organizational Commitment Scale was developed by Meyer, Allen, and Smith (1993). These sub-dimensions are affective, continuance, and normative. Analyzing the suitability of Meyer et al.'s (1993) three dimensional commitment scare for Turkish workers, Wasti (2000) found the alpha values of the dimensions of organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) as.79, .58, and .75, respectively. In his own study, Sarıdede (2004) found the alpha values of the dimensions of organizational commitment to be .84, .60, and .50, respectively. The reliability coefficient of the very study was found to be .78.

Analysis of Data

The predictive relationships between the values of university employees and mobbing and organizational commitment was analyzed according to "Structural Equation Modeling' with AMOS 16 Program. Structural equation modeling is a statistical approach used to test a theoretical model that presents the causal relationships between latent variables (Shumacker & Lomax, 2004). The predictive relationship between the values held by university employees and mobbing, on the one hand, and organizational commitment, on the other, is illustrated in Figure 1.
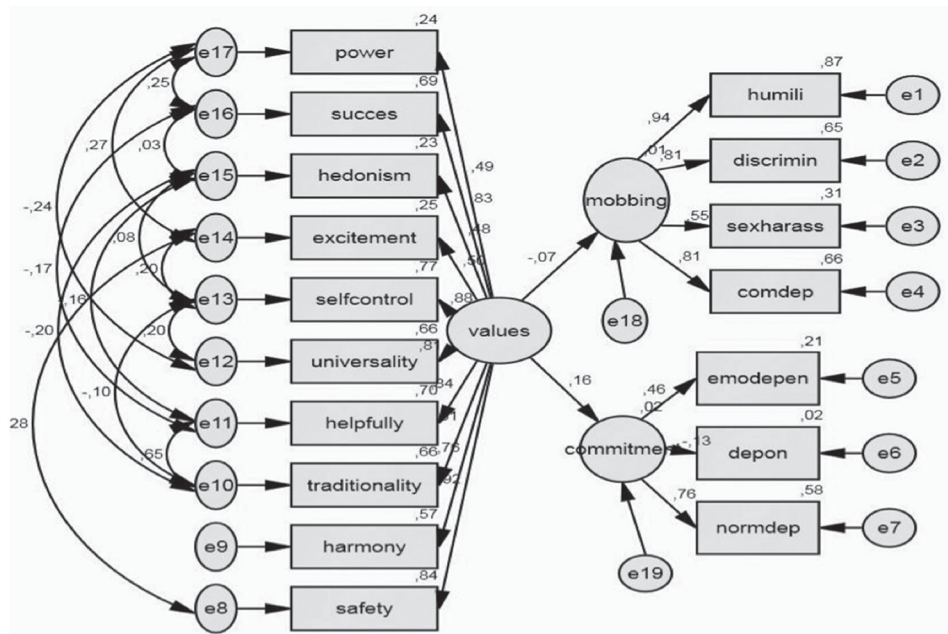

Figure 1. The model suggested for the relationships between values and mobbing and organizational commitment.

Findings

One of the ways to test the hypothesis associated with the model in Figure 1 is by using a chi-square (x^2), $\{x^2 / sd\}$ fix index $(x^2 = 183,12,\ df = 41\ p = 000)$. The fact that the x^2 value obtained from the model is less than 'three' and is meaningless at a level of $p > .05$ indicate that the model is suitable. Since the significance value related to x^2 is greater than .05, it can be established that the model is in accordance with the universe covariance matrix (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosburger, & Müller, 2003). Within the scope of this study, the model can be described as suitable due to the fact that the chi-square index is meaningful (significant) at a level of $p < .01$. But one of the key assumptions of the compliance index x^2 is large enough sample. This assumption has not been met in many studies (Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). Since the x^2 test is sensitive to the size of the sample, alternative measurements should be considered (Yılmaz & Çelik, 2009).

There are different goodness of fit indexes (GFI) used to evaluate the suitability of the model and statistical functions of these indexes. Table 1 presents the standard fit measures used to evaluate the suitability of the model and values associated with the suitability of the suggested model.

Table 1
Standard Fit Measures and Fit Measures of the Suggested Model

Fit Measures		Good Fit	Acceptable	Suggested Model
RMSEA	Root Mean Square of the Approximate Errors	0<RMSEA<0.05	$0.05 \leq$ RMSEA ≤ 0.10	.08
NFI	Normed Fit Index	$0.95 \leq$ NFI ≤ 1	$0.90 \leq$ NFI ≤ 0.95	.92
CFI	Comparative Fit Index	$0.97 \leq$ CFI ≤ 1	$0.95 \leq$ CFI ≤ 0.97	.95
AGFI	Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	$0.90 \leq$ AGFI ≤ 1	$0.85 \leq$ AGFI ≤ 0.90	.87
GFI	Goodness of Fit Index	$0.95 \leq$ GFI ≤ 1	$0.90 \leq$ GFI ≤ 0.95	.91

When the fit indexes of the model in Figure 1 are analyzed using the information in Table 1, the following values are obtained: RMSEA = .08 (> .05); NFI = .92 (> .90); CFI = .94 (> .95); AGFI = .87; and GFI = .91. CFI values are within acceptable measuring ranges. The fit indexes from the model indicate that the results are acceptable. Table 2 presents the correlation and regression values between the variables and the standard error, critical ratio, and significance values of these values.

Table 2
Correlation and Regression Values Between the Variables in the Model

Regression		Standard Error	β	Critical Ratio	p
Values	Mobbing	.08	-.07	-2.36	.18
Organizational Commitment	Mobbing	.17	.93	12.37	.00

Table 2 suggests that the regression value between university employees' values and mobbing is -0.7, that the regression weights of organizational commitment's prediction power of mobbing is .93, and that these values are significant at a level of $p < .01$. As the model is completely significant, there is a one-way prediction between insignificant values and mobbing.

Discussion

This study proved that values are statistically a significant predictor of mobbing and organizational commitment. As a result, values such as power, success, hedonism, stimulation, self-control, universality, benevolence, conventionalism, conformity, and security have a positive impact on mobbing and organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is closely related (1) to behavioral structure, such as release, absence, or job performance; (2) to attitudinal, emotional, and cognitive structures, such as job satisfaction; and (3) to a worker's qualifications, such as his job and role (Balay, 2000). Organizational commitment is also effective in encouraging workers to remain a member of the organization (Özdemir & Cemaloğlu, 2000).

Thus, values, mobbing and organizational commitment are important concepts that are closely related to each other in terms of organizational behavior. Yet, these relationships are not clearly defined. Factors such as university employees' academic environment, the university's management style, managers' attitudes, the university's social image, employees' job security, and the university' executive applications enable one to question the academicians' anxiety, expectations, attitudes, and problems in terms of values (Yaman, 2008). Hence, in the studies done with university employees suffering from mobbing (Yaman, 2010), the data indicates that mobbing reduces organizational commitment level. Although there are no specific studies about values, mobbing, and organizational commitment of academicians in the literature, Leymann (1996) investigated people who stated themselves as being tough, finding that such individuals' behaviors did not originate from a genetic personality disorder, but stemmed instead from the fact that they worked in a workplace structure and culture that created an environment that stigmatized them. The personality structure shows parallelism with values in terms of individual differences (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994).

While studying practices in Sweden, Leymann emphasized that mobbing may be defined as the systematic, hostile, and unethical communication of one or more individual to another person (Davenport, Schwartz, & Elliott, 2003). Since the day that the concept of mobbing was introduced, it has attracted considerable attention both theoretically and practically, with several studies having been conducted on it. In addition to the extensive studies conducted on mobbing in the workplace (Casimir, 2002; Lewis & Orford, 2005; Mikkelsen, 2004; Yaman, 2008; Zapf & Einarsen, 2001), different topics such as psychological effects of psychological violence at work (DiMartino, 2003; Leymann & Gustaffson, 1996; Lynch & O'Moore, 2004; Mikkelsen & Einarsen, 2002), reasons for mobbing (Einarsen, 1999; Einarsen, Raknes, & Matthiesen, 1994; Eriksen & Einarsen, 2004; Hoel, 2004; Sheehan, Barker, & Rayner, 1999; Zapf, 1999), and the relationship between mobbing and organizational climate (Vartia, 1996; Vickers, 2006) have also been explored. The findings of these studies point out that female academicians suffer more than males (Björkqvist, Österman, & Hjelt-Bäck, 1994) and that implementers

are hierarchically above the sufferers. Thus, people who have no values or who are not aware of their own values implement psychological violence/mobbing in their work environment and is therefore directly related to the individual's personality pattern.

When these values are emphasized within a culture, individuals' level of self-respect are positively affected. Hence, in Schwartz's Theory of Values, power, success, and self-orientation are considered basic value dimensions (Bilsky & Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz & Boehnke, 2004). In particular, such values as "holding social power," "protecting social image," "being proficient," "being successful," and "having influence" –all of which are listed under power and success– are emphasized as a connection between both an individual's personality pattern and perception scheme (Coopersmith, 1967; Heatherton & Wyland, 2003; Humphrey, 2004; Wigfield & Eccles, 1994).

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