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## Analysis of Primary School Teachers' Opinions About The Mobbing Concept

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to examine the dimensions of the mobbing phenomenon in primary schools and to determine what kind of a problem this phenomenon poses for primary school teachers and what solutions are offered. Therefore, phenomenological design, one of the qualitative research designs, was preferred in the study. The research was carried out with 8 primary school teachers working in Aydın in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. Participants were determined in regard to criterion sampling methods, one of the purposive sampling methods. A semi-structured interview form consisting of 9 open-ended questions were used to gather data. As a result of the interviews with the participants, a total of 57 pages of raw data were gathered and the data were analyzed through content analysis method. Findings were aimed to be explained within the scope of 6 themes that emerged in line with the data gathered. With reference to the results, the participants have been rarely confronted with mobbing throughout their working life, the mobbing behaviours were imposed by the people relatively in line with their position mostly in a top down hierarchical order. Effects of the mobbing phenomenon were negatively reflected not only on the victim side but also on the victim's family, environment, and the institution they worked for. It was determined that the participants mostly preferred to find more individual solutions.

**Keywords:** Mobbing, primary school teacher, educational institutions, phenemology.

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of mobbing, which has come to the forefront in the rapidly changing and developing business life of the 21st century based on intense competition, has started to be systematically addressed by academic circles. In today's workplace environments, employees can be exposed to physical or emotional mobbing from time to time. When the literature on the phenomenon of mobbing is examined, the phenomenon of mobbing can be used to express situations such as bullying, work or employee harassment, emotional abuse, ill-treatment, mobbing, victimization, verbal abuse, psychological terror, and psychological violence (WHO [World Health Organization], 2003). While Yamada (2004), Eser (2008) and Tutar (2004) use the term "mobbing" to express psychological violence in terms of ethics, law and forensic medicine, in which an employee is chosen for maltreatment, Leyman (1996) uses "*mobbing*" in the context of the business world, it is possible to see that he uses it to express emotional attack and associates it with these concepts.

It is a phenomenon of mobbing that comes from the Latin word "mobile vulgus" meaning "indecisive crowd" (Davenport et al., 2003). Heinz Leymann is the founder of the International Anti-Mobbing movement, which enables the concept of mobbing to be used with its current meaning (Namie & Namie 2003). Leymann (1990) defined mobbing as the systematic, hostile and unethical practices of one or more people against the others.

The mobbing process begins as a result of attacks on people's reputation, self, quality of life, health, social relations and professional status for individual, social and organizational reasons. In environments where mobbing is experienced, intense fear, dull and colorless relationships, stress, gossip, disinformation, undemocratic attitudes (Yaman, 2009) and communication disorders are common.

Self-harming as a result of pecuniary and non-pecuniary attacks, being on the side of the strong, choosing to remain silent, physical and mental disorders (Kirel, 2008), inability to socialize, unemployment, helplessness, feeling of loneliness, physical discomfort and depression, suicide and mental health deterioration can appear. In this process, although only the victim is exposed to mobbing, the victim's family, environment and social life are directly or indirectly affected by this situation (Davenport et al., 2003; Leyman, 1990).

The phenomenon of mobbing can occur in organizations in two ways, vertically and horizontally. Vertical bullying is not only directed from the upper levels to the lower levels, but can also occur from the bottom up. In the vertical mobbing phenomenon, not only the superiors but also the employees can act mobbing against their superiors or supervisors. The phenomenon of horizontal mobbing can occur among those with equal status or among people with functional relationships (Mimaroglu & Özgen, 2008). Individuals can be exposed to vertical or horizontal mobbing, no matter how high the education level of the individuals and the education profile of the community they work in. In schools, which are the heart of the education community, mobbing can sometimes be experienced among teachers and teachers, among teachers and staff working in auxiliary services, among teachers and administrators, or among teachers and parents. In particular, as a result of teachers being exposed to mobbing, the academic productivity of their colleagues and students may decrease, absenteeism may increase as students and teachers and unrest in the teachers' room may increase. In summary, all components in the institution exposed to mobbing can be negatively charged from this situation. Mayhew and McCarthy (2004) state that

14% of those who are bullied in the education sector and who work in the same environment are adversely affected and 20% of those affected generally decide to leave this workplace.

The success of an institution is to expect an education community to achieve success in every sense by establishing a full bond with all the components of that institution, minimizing behaviors that threaten mental and physical health an ethical understanding where managers can take positive initiatives for their employees and where cooperation is experienced instead of a competitive environment. An approach that prioritizes competition rather than cooperation, emphasizes individual success rather than teamwork and tolerates aggressive behaviors which can negatively affect working life and thus employees. Because an institution, workplace or organization is affected by the norms and values of the society in which it is housed, its working culture and the level of development. In other words, the dominant elements of the culture of the institution, organization or workplace can reveal the phenomenon of mobbing, suppress it or accelerate the process of mobbing (Yıldız and Kalkış, 2010)

Because of the competitive environment brought about by globalization, there is a statistical increase in mobbing cases observed in workplaces, as well as the size and severity of mobbing phenomenon expands over time, which emerges as workplace terrorism in terms of workplaces (İlhan, 2010; Tınaz, 2006). Considering the devastating effects of this workplace terrorism in terms of employees; while it causes loss of productive and qualified employees, low performance of the employee, decrease in organizational commitment, low motivation, when considered in terms of workplace; causes pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages (Deniz, 2007; Özkul Use & Çarıkçı, 2010).

Although mobbing is seen in every work environment, it is an important problem that it is also seen in educational institutions. With reference to the ILO (International Labor Organization) report, some occupational groups are much more likely to be exposed to violence. These occupational groups include health workers, social workers, housekeepers, bank workers, taxi drivers and teachers. When the literature is examined, the subject of mobbing (Alpaslan & Tunç, 2009), mobbing in the workplace (Acar & Dündar, 2008; Bozbel & Palaz, 2007; Tınaz, 2006), organization, organizational commitment, organizational silence, individual and organization, personal and organizational effects and mobbing related to organizational opposition (Demir & Çavus, 2009; Gül & Ağıröz, 2011; Gül & Özcan, 2011; Karcıoğlu & Çelik, 2012; Kayış, 2019; Kırel, 2007; Mimaroglu & Özgen, 2007; Özler et al. , 2008; Tetik, 2010) about occupational health and mobbing that health workers are exposed to (Dere, 2020; Gül, 2009), about the mobbing that academic staff is exposed to (Şenerkal, 2014), educational institutions, school workers and school life quality. (Altunay et al., 2014; Güven, 2019; Yılmaz, 2019), on the subject of bullying that teachers and administrators are exposed to (Bostancı, 2019; Çam, 2013; Deniz, 2020; Durusu, 2019; Ekinci, 2019; Gençer, 2019; Gülenç, 2019; Koç & Bulut, 2009; Şerbetçiğlu, 2019) studies have been carried out. Although there are many studies on mobbing cases related to different concepts in the field of educational sciences in the literature, it is thought that the study will contribute to the literature in terms of the fact that there is no direct or indirect study of the concept of mobbing experienced by primary school teachers, and the current study deals with the concept of mobbing from a multidimensional perspective. As a result, there is not enough research on the mobbing actions experienced by primary school teachers in Turkey. In this context, the findings to be obtained from this research; It is hoped that by determining teachers' mobbing perception levels, awareness and sensitivity on the subject will help to encourage the related authorities to produce solutions with the detection of the mobbing problem, and will also shed light on the researches about the mobbing phenomenon. In this context, the aim of the study is to examine the

dimensions of the mobbing phenomenon in primary schools and to determine what kind of a problem this phenomenon poses for teachers. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What does mobbing mean?
2. What is a healthy classroom environment like?
3. What is the level of mobbing behaviors, direction and frequency?
4. What are the reasons for being a target of mobbing?
5. What are the effects of mobbing on the institution?
6. What are the methods of coping with mobbing?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

The phenomenology design was used in this qualitative study, which aims to determine how this phenomenon poses a problem for primary school teachers by examining the dimensions of the mobbing phenomenon in primary schools. This design aims to reveal our experiences in our own world and the meanings we ascribe to these experiences by focusing on the phenomena that we are aware of in daily life but do not have a detailed and in-depth thought and understanding (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). In this study, it is aimed to reveal the experiences of primary school teachers about mobbing and the meanings they attribute to these experiences. As Denscombe (2017) stated, in this study, primary school teachers' experiences within the framework of mobbing and the basic features of the meanings they attribute to these experiences, the essence of the experience and the structure of the experiences were aimed to be revealed.

### **Study Group**

The participants of the research are primary school classroom teachers who work as primary school teachers in Aydın in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. In order to best reflect the opinions of the potential participants on the subject, criterion sampling, one of the purposeful sampling methods, was used in choosing teachers, since "working as a primary school teachers and being exposed to mobbing" was determined as the basic criterion. In this context, 8 primary school teachers, 4 male and 4 female, participated in the study. Before the interview, all information about the purpose and subject of the research was explained to the participants in detail and the necessary permissions for the audio recording were received from the participants who accepted the interview. In addition, the participants' names were labeled with codes changing from K1 to P8 in order to comply with the principle of confidentiality of the participants' identity information and to protect the participants.

The data regarding the participants are given in Table 1.

Table.1 Data on participants

| Participant Code | Age | Gender | Instructed Class |
|------------------|-----|--------|------------------|
| K1               | 43  | M      | 1                |
| K2               | 48  | M      | 2                |
| K3               | 53  | F      | 3                |
| K4               | 52  | F      | 4                |
| K5               | 45  | M      | 1                |
| K6               | 48  | F      | 2                |
| K7               | 51  | F      | 3                |
| K8               | 39  | M      | 4                |

As seen in Table 1, 50% of the participants are female and 50% are male primary school teachers. While two primary school teachers represent each grade level, it is seen that the age range of the participants is generally between 40-50.

### Data Collection

The data related to the research were gathered through the semi-structured interview form created by the researchers. In the process of creating the interview form, bullying, social bullying, psychological violence, violence, harassment, inconvenience, pressure, mobbing, bullying, etc. a literature review was made on the subject, theses and articles were examined and in line with 3 subject experts' confirmation (a subject area expert from the department of educational sciences of a social sciences institute of a university in the Aegean region, a subject area expert from the basic education department, a subject area expert from the social sciences and Turkish education department) interview questions were formed. The pilot application of the form was made with 2 primary school teachers working in a different district of Aydın, the interview questions were re-evaluated with the experts in the field in line with the feedback and the semi-structured interview form consisting of 9 open-ended questions to be used in the interview was given its final form.

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the interviews made within the scope of the research were carried out on an online platform at the appropriate time intervals for the participants and social distance and mask rules were pursued in the face-to-face interviews. In the interviews, notes were taken for the interviews as well as the audio recording and no more than one participant was interviewed on the same day, the limit of each interview was determined as a maximum of 2 hours and the interviews lasted for 45 minutes-1 hour on average. The interviews conducted on the online platform were held at the appropriate times of the participants and the face-to-face interviews were held in an available room at the school, at the participant's or researcher's home. At the end of the interviews with the participants, a total of 57 pages of raw data were obtained.

## **Analysis of Data**

Content analysis technique was used to analyze the data gathered in this study. The main purpose of content analysis is to reach a definite idea in the disclosure of the data gathered. Basic method in content analysis is to gather similar information within the framework of a certain idea and subject and to find a way to make it understood by the reader (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2006). Within the scope of the research, the data obtained from the interview forms about the opinions, knowledge and experiences of the primary school teachers on the concept of mobbing were analyzed by content analysis method. Categories and themes were formed after the coding process within the framework of the data obtained, and the themes were interpreted by summarizing and tabulating. In addition, direct quotations are frequently used in order to directly reflect the views of the participants in the interpretation processes of the themes.

## **Procedures for Validity and Reliability**

In order to ensure the validity of the research, the data were gathered at different times. For the accuracy of the findings, confirmation was received from a total of 3 instructors, respectively from the Social Sciences Institute educational sciences department, basic education department, social sciences and Turkish education department of a university located in the Aegean region. Data were written, described and interpreted objectively. In the context of the reliability of the research, the in-depth interviews were carried on, real data were gathered from the participants and the data were directly presented in the findings. Other than the researchers, two subject area experts were included in the analysis process, and the coding agreement and the inter-coder agreement score were calculated. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), it is stated that the consensus among coders should be at least 80%. In this study, two randomly selected interview forms were coded by researchers and subject matter experts, and the consistency between the analyzes of the coders was checked. When the consistency and agreement (agreement/agreement+disagreement)/100 formula (Miles & Huberman, 1994) between the coders were examined, the agreement coefficient between the coders was calculated as .86. In addition, the reliability was aimed to be increased by labeling participants' names with codes changing from K1 to K8.

## **Ethics Committee Approval**

This research was carried out in accordance with the decision of Aydın Adnan Menderes University Educational Research Ethics Committee dated 06.09.2021 and numbered 2021/20.

## **Results**

In this study considering the views of primary school teachers, the answers were sought for what the phenomenon of mobbing is, what a healthy working environment is and should be, whether they have encountered mobbing in their working life, what kind of bullying they have faced and how they sought a solution, the reasons for being the target of mobbing, which group confronts mobbing the most. And the most common mobbing behaviors were examined, 6 themes and different categories were included in line with the content analysis. It is seen that the themes are gathered under the headings of “The Concept of Mobbing, Healthy Classroom Environment, Mobbing Behaviors, Frequency and Direction, Reasons for Being a Target of Mobbing, Reflections of Mobbing to the Institution and Methods of Coping with Mobbing”.

## Theme 1. The Concept of Mobbing

In order to reveal how the concept of mobbing is perceived in the eyes of primary school classroom teachers, the list of categories and codes extracted from the questions asked to the participants is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Theme, category and code list obtained from teachers' opinions on the concept of mobbing

| Theme                     | Category           | Code                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Mobbing                   | Psychological      | Being under pressure          |
|                           |                    | Ignore the person             |
|                           |                    | To be ignored                 |
|                           |                    | Be intimidated                |
|                           |                    | Limit                         |
|                           |                    | Oppression                    |
|                           |                    | Verbally harassing            |
|                           | To bother verbally |                               |
|                           | Physically         | Offend                        |
|                           |                    | Discourage work               |
|                           |                    | Make uneasy                   |
|                           |                    | Exposure to negative behavior |
|                           |                    | To intervene                  |
|                           |                    | Oppression                    |
| Cause physical discomfort |                    |                               |

It is seen that the opinions of the participants on mobbing generally focus on two categories. When we look at these categories of mobbing, we can say that there are physical and psychological mobbing. The concept of mobbing; A sample excerpt from the views of teachers who expressed the concepts of "being under pressure, ignoring the person, being ignored, intimidated, limiting, oppressing, verbally and nonverbally disturbing" is as follows:

*"... Mobbing is feeling under pressure. To ignore one's self is to offend. To discourage work is to be restless." (K-1)*

Participants who explained the concept of mobbing mostly with the concepts of physical mobbing; They expressed it with the concepts of "offending, discouraging work, disturbing, exposure to negative behavior, intervention, pressure and physical discomfort". A sample excerpt from teacher opinions supporting these views is as follows:

*"It is the feeling of being constantly pressured by someone. This may be the administrator, parent or teacher. It is all kinds of verbal and physical negative behaviors applied to the other party, consciously or unconsciously." (K-4)*

## Theme 2. Healthy Classroom Environment

The category and code list formed pursuant to the interviews with the participants in order to reveal what a healthy classroom environment is like and how it should be in the eyes of primary school teachers is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Theme, category and code list obtained from teachers' views on a healthy classroom environment

| Theme                         | Category  | Code                                    |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Healthy Classroom Environment | Class   | Peaceful                                |
|                               |   | Trustworthy                             |
|                               |   | Technologically and physically equipped |
|                               |   | Less class size                         |
|                               |   | Spacious                                |
|                               |   | Clean                                   |
|                               |   | Designed for children's development     |
|                               |   | Sincere                                 |
|                               |   | With rules                              |
|                               | Carefree  |   |
|                               | Student   | There is positive communication         |
|                               |   | Where there is cooperation              |
| Teacher                       | The place to be happy when coming to school       |   |
|                               | There is positive communication                   |   |
|                               | No parent involvement                             |   |
|                               | The teacher is appreciated                        |   |
|                               | Sincere   |   |
|                               | Where there is cooperation                        |   |
|                               | Where the administrator stands behind the teacher |   |
|                               | Production is encouraged                          |   |
|                               | Producer appreciated                              |   |
| Manager                       | Ignoring the status difference                    |   |
|                               | People are not despised                           |   |
|                               | where there is cooperation                        |   |
|                               | good human relations                              |   |
|                               | There is positive communication                   |   |
| Sincere                       |   |   |

It is seen that the related answers of teachers who participated in the interview constituted the “healthy classroom environment” theme, the categories of which are “classroom”, “student”, “teacher” and “administrator”. In terms of the classroom “a healthy classroom environment” is explained with the concepts of "peaceful, safe, technologically and physically equipped, with less class size, spacious, clean, designed appropriately for developmental period of children, sincere, with rules and free from anxiety". A healthy classroom environment of teachers in terms of students; It is regarded as "positive communication and cooperation". In teachers’ opinions, a healthy classroom environment is explained with the concepts of "where one will be happy upon coming to school, there is positive communication, parents do not interfere, the teacher is appreciated, sincere, there is cooperation, the administrator stands behind the teacher, the growth is encouraged and the procreator is appreciated". A healthy classroom environment of teachers in terms of administrators; It is seen that they explain it with the expressions of "status difference is ignored, people are not despised, there is cooperation, good human relations, positive communication and sincerity".

Teachers considered a healthy classroom environment as a whole in terms of students, classroom environment, teachers and administrators. Exemplary quotes from teachers' opinions showing that all the components of the school actually have duties and homework in the process of creating a healthy school and classroom environment are as follows:

*“I believe that a healthy school environment will be created when the administration and employees can work in cooperation, the administration stands behind the teacher, the administration approaches the staff with tolerance, and an environment of peace and trust is provided. After these conditions are met, it is an anxiety-free environment where there are teachers who have sufficient knowledge in each skill lesson, who are technologically competent, activities that will contribute to the social development of children are organized, and students are happy and peaceful. For me, it is an environment where the number of classes does not exceed 20, where employees are encouraged to produce new ideas and are rewarded.” (K-5)*

*“It is a clean and spacious environment where good behavior is rewarded, positive communication is ensured, there is minimal human relations especially between the administration and the teacher, the classrooms are adequately equipped, the class size is not large, and there is sufficient physical equipment.” (K-2)*

*“.....The child should feel safe in the classroom environment. No matter what, parents should be prevented from interfering with students. It should be an environment where teachers are appreciated. Constant criticism discourages the teacher from working. If the good things done are appreciated by the administration, they will be more successful and happier. The teacher should take care of the children, and the administration should deal with the teachers. In sickness etc. must be sought and asked if there is anything to be done. Thus, a friendly atmosphere, trust and peace environment can be provided in the school. Sanctions should be applied to teachers and students who insist on not following the rules. Good behavior should also be rewarded.” (K-3).*

### Theme 3. Mobbing Behaviors, Frequency and Direction

All of the primary school teachers who participated in the interview were exposed to heavy or mild mobbing behavior. The category and code list of who applies this mobbing behavior and how often is as follows:

Table 4. Theme, category and code list obtained from teachers' views on mobbing behaviors, frequency and direction

| Theme   | Category                             | Code                         |
|---|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Mobbing Behaviors,<br>Frequency and Direction | Anytime<br>(Administrators)          | To shout                     |
|   |                                      | Do not greet                 |
|   |                                      | I don't listen               |
|   |                                      | Lowering motivation          |
|   |                                      | Ignore                       |
|   |                                      | Suggest                      |
|   | Sometime<br>(Administrator & Parent) | Admin pressure               |
|   |                                      | Insult                       |
|   |                                      | Devalue                      |
|   |                                      | Interfere with the classroom |
|   |                                      | Union power                  |
|   |                                      | To intimidate                |
|   |                                      | To be humiliated             |
|   |                                      | Scorn                        |
|   |                                      | Exclude                      |
| Rarely<br>(Administrator+Parent)              | Call open                            |                              |
|   | Gossip                               |                              |
|   | See faulty                           |                              |
|   | To make fun of                       |                              |
|   | Talk sarcastically                   |                              |
|   | Insult                               |                              |
|   | Offend                               |                              |
|   | Interfere with the classroom         |                              |
|   | Humiliate                            |                              |
|   | Always open call                     |                              |
|   | Continuous negative feedback         |                              |
|   | Make you feel inadequate             |                              |
|   | Disrespect for religious differences |                              |

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Psychological fray  
Open an investigation  
To accuse  
Unfair sanction  
Being driven  
Give off duty  
Threaten  
Interfere with private space

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All of the teachers who participated in the interview stated that they were exposed to mobbing by the school administration, by the administrators and parents, in a certain part of their life, in a particular situation throughout their working life at times or frequently. When we look at the direction of mobbing, it is understood considering the interviews that it is generally one-way, and this direction is from top position to bottom or from outward to inward.

He/she was always bullied; Teachers explaining with the concepts of "don't shout, don't greet, don't listen, decrease motivation, ignore and suggest" state that mobbing is imposed by the principal and assistant principals who use their status misappropriately. An example excerpt from teacher opinions supporting this view is as follows:

*“It is mostly applied by the administration. They do it using their position. People who do this are far from the concept of character. Unfortunately, among the teachers, there are people who act unbecoming of the educator and crush their other friend in order to come to the fore. Parents do too. There have been events that I have witnessed in this regard. A parent of my teacher friend was constantly complaining to the principal about the teacher. That parent was officially obsessed with the teacher. When the principal did not stand behind his teacher friend, the friend experienced uneasiness.” (K-4)*

Sometimes and rarely, he/she was exposed to mobbing; “Administrative pressure, humiliation, devaluation, interference with the class, union power, mobbing, humiliation, contempt, exclusion, flattery, gossiping, blaming, mocking, insulting, offending, class interference. Teachers explaining this with the expressions of "demeaning, humiliating, constantly seeking out, constantly negative feedback, making you feel incompetent, disrespecting dissidence, psychological exhaustion, holding an inquiry, accusing, unfair sanctions, dismissal from work, assigning off-duty, threatening and “interfering with the personal boundary”. While explaining the direction of their exposure to mobbing from above (administrator) and from outward (students’ parents), they state that they are mostly exposed to mobbing by administrators. A sample excerpt from the views of teachers supporting these views is as follows:

*“The most common is that the principal comes and says there is a complaint about you. Parents were always complaining about me. I mean who is complaining about what? There is no answer. There is only one complaint, he says be careful. He was constantly dealing with my parents, as the principal said. Being sarcastic, belittling, acting like I'm incompetent makes you feel under enough pressure. Their insulting speech sounds like a slap to me. The principal's body language was always bad towards me and some of my friends. Turning away when talking to him, being interested in something else or starting to talk to someone else... His ignoring the answer I gave while asking him, and his ignorance of me even though I started the statement as the manager... These both made me*

*uneasy and tense. Even as I describe it, I feel as if I am reliving what I experienced at that moment. As people who are really engaged in education, what we have been through is very sad. He easily offends students around him. Depreciating and humiliating the parents as well. Therefore, there is no atmosphere of peace and security in the school. Even the kids don't shake the teachers.” (K-1)*

**Theme 4. Reasons for Mobbing**

The category and code list showing the reasons why the classroom teachers who participated in the interview were exposed to mobbing are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. List of themes, categories and codes obtained from teachers' opinions on reasons for being a target of mobbing

| Theme                                 | Category | Code                               |
|---------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Reasons For Being A Target of Mobbing | Teacher  | Calm building                      |
|                                       |          | To be compatible                   |
|                                       |          | Upbringing                         |
|                                       |          | Not to answer                      |
|                                       |          | Be well-intentioned                |
|                                       |          | Inexperience                       |
|                                       |          | Be silent                          |
|                                       |          | Not knowing your rights            |
|                                       |          | Union difference                   |
|                                       |          | Gender                             |
|                                       |          | The prints of the power worshipers |

Teachers who participated in the interview express mobbing as a policy of mobbing imposed by the administrators to the teacher rather than the teacher to the teacher. The reasons for the mobbing actions imposed by the administrators to the teachers were explained by them with the expressions of "calm temperament, being agreeable, upbringing, being unresponsive, benevolence, inexperience, silence, ignorance of their rights, union differences, gender and pressure from those who “worship power”. An example excerpt from teachers' views on the reasons for being the target of bullying is as follows:

*“They use mobbing as a result of the inexperienced and self-aware teachers who the administration can denigrate and who are less senior than themselves, belittle other teachers. If there is a difference of opinion, they apply mobbing more easily. Perhaps the most important reason for this is that the victim is silent and does not know their rights. No matter how eager I was to practice the profession, our union differences caused me to get permission for the activities. I couldn't find my right. I also think that being a woman is effective.” (K-2)*

## Tema 5. Reflections of Mobbing on the Institution

Considering the analysis of the data obtained from the primary school teachers who participated in the interview, the category and code list showing the reflections of mobbing to the institution is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. List of themes, categories and codes obtained from teachers' opinions on the reflections of mobbing on the institution

| Theme                                     | Category      | Code                        |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Reflections of Mobbing on the Institution | Environment   | Unsafe environment          |
|   |               | Tense atmosphere            |
|   |               | Unhappy environment         |
|   |               | Restless environment        |
|   | Worker        | Trying not to reveal        |
|   |               | Unhappy staff               |
|   |               | Close oneself to innovation |
|   |               | End of creativity           |
|   |               | Not feeling belonging       |
|   |               | Inefficiency                |
|   |               | Low motivation              |
|   |               | Constant fatigue            |
|   |               | Psychological depression    |
|   |               | Experiencing groupings      |
|   |               | Feeling of boredom          |
| Extreme level of anxiety                  |               |                             |
| Fear of making mistakes                   |               |                             |
| Feeling of burnout                        |               |                             |
| Become a robot                            |               |                             |
| Become desensitized                       |               |                             |
|   | Relationships | Distance relationships      |

As a result of the interviews, it is seen that although being exposed to mobbing negatively affects the school environment, school staff and employee relations, it mostly affects school staff. It is understood that the mobbing practices that the employees are exposed to not only affect the school environment and employee relations, but also family and community relations, causing psychological depression, drug treatment support and further damage. Teachers explain the negative reflections of mobbing on the school environment as "unsafe environment, tense environment, unhappy environment and restless environment". Teachers stated that the negative reflections of mobbing on school staff were as follows: "Trying not to give deficits away, unhappy

staff, being discouraged from innovation, lack of creativity, lack of belonging, inefficiency, low motivation, constant fatigue, psychological depression, grouping, feeling of boredom, excessive anxiety level, fear of making mistakes, burnout. explains this feeling with the expressions of “robotization and depersonalization”. A sample excerpt from the above-mentioned negative reflections of the participants explaining the negative reflections of mobbing on employee relations with "distance relations" is as follows:

*“In institutions where there are administrators who practice mobbing, people try not to have deficits. They work, they try to do their job well, but they are not happy. They always feel under pressure. They have no other thought than to do the fixed given. There is discipline for teachers to do their duties. Creativity does not develop at the desired level. Insincere relations with the administration cause distrust. Someone working in an educational institution should come to school in peace and be happy so that the benefit for children is at the highest level. Nervous stress affects all of these negatively. Although I do a job that I love, I am researching another school and its management because of what I went through in this school. I will not look at it being so close to home again when choosing a school. Since I came to this school, I have been making choices in every appointment period. I don't feel like I belong in this school. Either the manager should change or I should go to a trustworthy school and work there. My experiences at school also affected my relationships with my wife and children. I am more impatient with my children at home. I can't be happy. Because when I come home, I think about the next day. I can't even sleep well at night. I'm constantly waking up. In case I fall asleep and hear something from the manager in the morning. I was starting to cry out of nowhere. This situation caused us to have arguments with my wife. These situations affected my psychology a lot.” (K-6)*

## **Tema 6. Methods of Dealing with Mobbing**

As a result of the analysis of the data obtained from the classroom teachers who participated in the interview, the list of categories and codes showing the methods of coping with mobbing is shown in Table 7.

Table 7. List of themes, categories and codes obtained from teachers' opinions on coping with mobbing

| <b>Theme</b>                    | <b>Category</b> | <b>Code</b>                                  |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Methods of Dealing with Mobbing | Sound           | Respond                                      |
|                                 |                 | Defend yourself                              |
|                                 |                 | To explain himself                           |
|                                 |                 | Answer                                       |
|                                 |                 | Learning about personal rights               |
|                                 |                 | Seeking your right by following the sequence |
|                                 |                 | Make oneself heard                           |
|                                 | Silent          | Be unresponsive to                           |
|                                 |                 | Shut up                                      |
|                                 |                 | Ignore                                       |

The teachers who participated in the interview chose two options for themselves when they were exposed to mobbing. In such a situation, teachers either answered by keeping their voices heard, sought their personal rights, sought their rights by following the line and made their voice heard in some way, learned and defended their rights by explaining themselves and struggled for making their voice heard and responded, or they tried to find another solution by staying silent, not reacting, keeping silent or ignoring them. A sample excerpt from the teacher's opinions, which shows the methods of coping with mobbing, with or without voice, is as follows:

*“I was generally unresponsive. I stopped. I tried not to be addressed by shouting. It was even worse if I answered. But when I tried the other person's method and I spoke loudly, I did not meet for a long time. When the problems at school started to affect my family, my husband entered the school principal's office. There were threatening conversations. The manager slammed his hand around in anger after my husband left. The manager reacted silently to me for a few days after my husband came, but then his attitude towards me changed completely. So that's the language he understood.” (K-7).*

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions**

In this study, in the eyes of primary school teachers, “what mobbing is, what a healthy working environment is and how it should be, whether they encounter mobbing in their working life, what kind of mobbing they face and how they seek a solution, the reasons for being the target of mobbing, which part of the mobbing is the most common” are handled. In this study, the most common mobbing behaviors of the students were examined. The following results were obtained considering the data gathered under 6 different themes: the concept of mobbing in the eyes of the classroom teachers, their views on a healthy classroom environment, the mobbing behaviors they experience, their frequency and direction, the reasons for being a target of mobbing, the reflections of mobbing on their institutions and ways of coping with mobbing.

Participants' opinions on the concept of mobbing are as follows: “to be under pressure, to ignore the mobber, to be ignored, to intimidate, to restrict, to pressure, to verbally disturb, to offend, to discourage work, to disturb, to be exposed to negative behavior, to interfere, to oppress, to physical discomfort”. A review of the literature reveals similar research results. Davenport et al. (2003) and Tutar (2004) as a process consisting of malicious behaviors aiming to exclude a person from the workplace through blockage, mass offensive behaviour or causing distress, humiliation, unfair accusation, emotional torment, general harassment, psycho-terrorism, Andrea Adams expresses it as “constantly finding fault and humiliating individuals” in a TV program (Koç & Bulut, 2009). Gül (2009), on the other hand, mentions that mobbing includes physical violence, discrimination, threat, social isolation and imbalance. Tınaz (2006) explains the concept of mobbing with the expressions of "psychological harassment at work, emotional violence, moral harassment at work, mobbing, bullying at work, psychological attack on mobbing at work". Bozbel and Palaz (2007) similarly express the concept of mobbing with the concepts of "psychological violence, terror and oppression".

Participants discussed a safe and healthy classroom environment in the context of "technological and physical competencies of the classroom, student, teacher and administrator" and explained them with the following expressions. A healthy classroom is defined in this study as “a peaceful, safe, well-equipped, spacious, clean classroom with rules designed in accordance with the developmental period of children, as well as having sincere and positive relations,

improving cooperation, students and teachers' being happy when they come to school, worry-free atmosphere, uncrowded classrooms." It is seen that an environment where the administration does not intervene with the workers arbitrarily, growth is encouraged, the procreator is appreciated, status difference is welcomed, and people are not despised, is expressed as a healthy workplace, a healthy classroom environment. Regarding the class sizes in terms of a healthy classroom environment, Özdayı (2002) mentions the crowded classroom as the third problem of education, and Güçlü (2002) talks about the difficulty of individual teaching in large classes. Yaman (2006) states that classroom teachers' giving verbal feedbacks to their students and behaving in accordance with individual differences not only creates a healthy classroom environment in the classroom, but also reflects positively on the communication among students. For this reason, it can be said that a classroom teacher whose classroom standards are near to the ideal standards affects the class participation, classroom discipline, and respect. Cakmak et al. (2008) reached similar conclusions by emphasizing that the two most important elements of classroom management are students and teachers, and that teachers should enable students to control themselves, use cognitive processes, think independently, and easily share all kinds of work they do with their teachers and fellow students. As a result, a healthy classroom environment can be achieved with a minimum level of physical and technological equipment, together with students and teachers who enter the classroom in a healthy way in every sense.

All of the participants are definitely the target of mobbing in different severity, the direction of the mobbing they experience is generally from top to bottom and from outward to inward; It is inferred that there is no mobbing behavior in the horizontal sense, and that in terms of frequency, the administrators in general, sometimes the administrator or parents, although rarely, the administrator and the parents impose it together. In the research, it was determined that the rate of mobbing imposed by the superiors on the workers of lower positions is higher than colleagues of the same level positions imposed mobbing on each other (Kök, 2006; O'Moore et al., 2003; Einarsen, 1999;), the most common and known type of mobbing is from top to bottom. It is a common fact that those in the lower levels of the organizational hierarchy are more exposed to mobbing and exhibit more silence behavior. According to Fox and Stallworth (2005), the fact that subordinates or subordinates in the organizational hierarchy are more exposed to mobbing and exhibiting silence behavior supports the results of the research. Gökçe (2006) also reached similar results and stated that the act of mobbing in schools is mostly imposed by school administrators.

It is seen that the participants explained the reasons for being exposed to mobbing with concepts such as "calm structure, being agreeable, upbringing, not responding, being well-intentioned, inexperience, being silent, not knowing their rights, union differences, gender and pressure from those who "worship power". Gökçe (2006) explains the main reasons that giving rise mobbing with expressions such as jealousy, different political views, gossip, misuse of power, passion for office, excess personnel. Here, while the participants were evaluated in terms of being mobbing victims, Gökçe (2006) evaluated the mobbing in terms of the malicious people. Altunay et al. (2014), on the other hand, categorizes the reasons why victims are exposed to mobbing related to the victims themselves, the institution, the environment, and the people imposing mobbing. For this reason, it is not fully reasonable to limit mobbing to individuals at work, focusing only on individual problems or individuals at work. Among the factors affecting mobbing are individuals, workplaces and workplace employees, as well as the changes in economy in the 21st century, competition, insecure employment, overwork, and changes in economic and political grounds have led to an increase in mobbing on employees.

Participants expressed the reflections of mobbing on the institution; environment (unhappy, restless, insecure and tense environment), employee (trying not to give deficits away, unhappy staff, being discouraged from innovation, lack of creativity, lack of belonging, inefficiency, low motivation, constant fatigue, psychological depression, groupings, feeling of boredom, excessive anxiety level, fear of making mistakes, feeling of burnout, robotization, depersonalization) and relationship (distance relationship). Leymann, (1996) also mentions the effects and reflections of mobbing on individual, organizational, society, country economy and families. In addition, when mobbing is considered in terms of the individual it can be inferred that the individual's health is deteriorated, he experiences stress, he gets into trouble, he wants to escape from work... and when it is considered in terms of workplaces and the environment certain undesirable situations appear such as increase in the levels of stress, distress and negative influence of the working personnel, absenteeism, unwillingness, low productivity and low performance in working life.

Participants discussed the ways of coping with mobbing completely individually; however, considering that the environment in which individuals and employees are exposed to mobbing is a workplace, environment, or organization, it can be said that the individual cannot efficiently fight mobbing alone. While Göymen (2020) stated that ways of coping with mobbing can be individual, organizational, with the help of the close circle, through legal means of struggle, moral compensation cases, Öztürk et al. (2015) recognize the dealing ways as raising self-confidence and self-esteem, getting over the victim mentality, maintaining maneuver distance, maintaining resilience in the face of physical and psychological stress, perception strategies, getting expert help, social support, and being careful about it, taking legal action and they also mention about the measures that can be taken both institutionally and individually. Altunay, Oral, and Yalçinkaya (2014) define it as individual, legal struggle and awareness raising.

In order to prevent the occurrence of horizontal or vertical, top-down, or bottom-up mobbing with students, teachers, administrators, auxiliary services and parents in educational institutions, and to detect and counteract the existing mobbing action in the educational institution.

- ✓ The administration, teachers, students and parents should be in contact for a healthy and safe school and classroom environment,
- ✓ Considering the direction of mobbing action, it is generally vertical and top-down, and administrators should be given training on the subject,
- ✓ It should be kept in mind that mobbing affects not only the school environment and employees, but also the family members of the employees,
- ✓ Training should be provided on how to find solutions for employees not to be exposed to mobbing or when they are exposed to mobbing,
- ✓ Only primary school teachers as participants were included in the study. Comparative data can be gathered by including primary school administrators, parents, auxiliary services and general administrative services for the further studies.
- ✓ The phenomenon of mobbing has been dealt with unilaterally only from the experiences and perspective of teachers and it has been inferred that mobbing action is generally vertical. For this reason, more data about the parties can be gathered by focusing on school administrators for the further studies.

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