

Mobbing exerts pressure on Employees; an empirical study exploring the mediating role of mobbing between Organizational Silence and Turnover Intentions

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Cite this paper: Zulfiqar, A., Bashir, I., Ahmad, M.M., Fatima, N., & Ajaz, S. (2020). Mobbing exerts pressure on employees; An empirical study exploring the mediating role of mobbing between organizational silence and turnover intentions. *Paradigms, SI(1)*, 32-37

In the context of today's business organizations, employee retention has become the emergent need because organizations had realized the importance of existing learned workers rather than to invest time and energy on new recruits. Although this perception of organizational top management is the bigger reason of unemployment or it may hinder the innovation and new talent. Besides the notion every organization confront employee turnover. This study intends to investigate the behaviors which lead to drive the intentions of employees towards turnover. Mobbing Behaviors effects directly culture perception of employees. In today's organizations it is important to understand the relationship between organizational silence, mobbing and turnover intentions. This cross-sectional and empirical study was planned to determine the effects of mobbing on employees' turnover intentions. 50 different companies. For this purpose, survey-based approach was followed, and data has been collected through questionnaire. All the scales were adopted from existing literature predefined and administered as required. Data was collected from service sector and public sector. Almost 50 different companies are targeted and with the average of 10 respondents from each organization were intended to contact. So, 500 respondents were contacted and requested to participate in prevailing research, among them 324 responded well and accurately. The data has been analyzed through SPSS and AMOS with the help of structural equation modeling. Results give a clear provision that mobbing plays significant role between organizational silence and turnover intention in Pakistani organizations. The results of this empirical study contribute to the literature by creating awareness about the topic not only for scholars but also for the executives as well.

Keywords: Organizational silence, Mobbing, Turnover Intention

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays to be successful, many organizations paying attention and concentrate to different method and tricks such as teamwork, organizational self-rule and strengthening internal environment and culture of the organization and firms. Accordingly, in today's organizations employees sharing ideas and their knowledge which leads to high performance of organization. So, establish alike an organizational zone and atmosphere is influential for organizations. Regardless of how, majority of employees would rather choose to be completely quiet. Probably this integrated with different elements such like afraid of losing the job or not frees to have a chance to utter their ideas to the managers or probably due to unadorned culture values (Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin 2003). In addition to organizational and environmental elements, management team can make an environment which supports organizational silence. In their consideration, Milliken, Morrison and Hewlin sum up the cause of silence of employees As stated by authors, the first category of reasons based on fears of revenge or being tag or consider adverse, fear of spoil a relationship, suspicious about vanity or uselessness or penalty, some are worried about negative influence on others. The other bunch of reasons is linked with either individual or organizational attributes or poor relationship with the supervisor (Vakola and Bouradas, 2005). Organizational silence causes many detrimental issues for organizations. Due to lack of feedbacks, silence can have a negative and bad influence on

decision making, learning and change at the organizational level, on the other hand, at the individual level employees can perceive being invaluable, absence of control and incongruity. By reason of decision making, correction of mistake, alteration and betterment are weakened due to organizational silence, it become apparent as a significant research theme or subject.

Apart from, having adverse influence both on individual and organizational even on a social level, perceive the mobbing behavior, identifying its reasons and taking the necessary care as warnings have become quite important. Leymann (1996) classified such behaviors as targeting self-esteem and the means of communication, attacks on personal social relations, attacks on the individual's reputation and character, attacks on persons professional quality and life situation, and attacks on the persons health. One the essential outcome of both organizational silence and mobbing is that employees are left. For that reason, understanding the relation between organizational silence, mobbing and employees turnover aim is necessary for today's organizations. Through this study, it is focused to examine the employee's behaviors by knowing and identifying the arbitrate influence of mobbing on the relationship between organizational silence and turnover aim. The study bases on three main parts. In the first part, the relationship between employee silence and left job aim are discussed and mentioned considering theoretical structure or model. The second part consists of technique of exploration and

the discussion of the unearthing. In the end and last part observed findings are evaluated.

The intensive literature of organizational silence, turnover intentions and mobbing focuses on the behavior of employees. Mobbing has negative impact on employee performance, their morals are down, and they are more intending to leave the organizations. Mostly employees have silent behavior in the task environment so, they can't share their opinions and sometimes innovative ideas due to their silent behavior. It is an extreme behavior that causes devastating response of employees. Companies get benefit when employees speak up. When employees feels comfortable; candidly voicing their opinions, suggestions, or concerns about organizations then organizations become better at handling threats as well as opportunities.

A study revealed the conception of mobbing in the workplace seems to be an increasing phenomenon in Pakistan, even though self-reported mobbing shows wide variations across nations. Mobbing (MO) gives a notion towards the identification of employee behavior through turnover intentions. The word of mob is a word derived from mobile valgus which means indecisive crowd in Latin. The verb mob means assembling, attacking or disturbing in Latin (ahin and Bedük, 2011: 121). The concept of mobbing was used for the first time in 1960s Konrad Lorenz Austrian scientist to define the harassment behavior applied by animals among themselves or any foreigner outside the cattle (Erdoan, 2009). Leymann who determined that the events of harassment and daunting occur widely in business world as a result of the studies he conducted in Sweden and Germany published his research findings in the form of report in 1984 and following this report the concept of mobbing started to be discussed in the manner to cover emotional harassments and aggressions in the workplace as well (Özleret.al., 2008).

Mobbing creates harmful issues in organization such as increase in absenteeism and employees leaving the organization and decrease in efficiency and organizational performance. Although mobbing occurs in any type of organizations, in sequence of the employees to work efficiently, mobbing should be averted. Organizational commitment is the attachment developed by employees with the organization. Commitment with organization is basically the attitude of employee that indicates the quality of linkage between employee and employer relationship due to organizational silence (OS) the level of productivity becomes lower. More employees are intended to leave the organizations through mobbing (MO) so the turnover intentions (TI) ratio is increased in business organizations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organizational Silence and Turnover Intention

Organizational silence is the word used to describe the collective-level procedure of execution and performance in response to significant problems facing by different organizations (Morrison and Milliken 2000). When the turnover intention increases, rate of job turnover and absences also increase. Turnover intention causes psychological,

sociological and economic problems. Because of these negative effects, researchers predict turnover behavior of employees and explain them so that the managers should take some measures to avoid potential turnovers of the employees of the organizations (Hwang and Kou, 2006). Fear of personal implication in the shared wrongdoing or questionable practices to maintain the organizational silence.

In the organizational structure, the relationship between workplace mobbing and employee turnover has been noted by many researchers, many studies reporting a positive relationship between mobbing and intention to leave (Hoel & Cooper 2000, Keshley & Jagatic 2000, Djurkovic et al. 2004, 2008). A wide range of labels have been used to describe workplace mobbing. The term mobbing is mostly used in Europe (Zapf 1999). There is concurrence that mobbing involves repeated forms of negative or hostile behaviors occurring in different times (Yamada 2000), which may include annoying, harassing, eliminating and negatively affecting the tasking abilities of individuals targeted. Mobbing is a dynamic process, provides the prospect of reaching a resolution increasingly not likely as the process unfolds and becomes more intense (Leymann & Gustafsson 1996, Zapf & Einarsen 2003). This often leaves the targets increasingly disposed to leave the organization, whether voluntarily in terms of leaving a job or involuntarily, by having their contracts completed (Leymann & Gustafsson 1996). Research on employee turnover goes back more than 50 years to the influential work of March and Simon (1958). Accordingly, definition of organizational silence after the conception of employee silence was included for the first time in 2000 in the study by Morrison and Milliken. In this study Morrison and Milliken (2000; 706) tried to determine the process, reasons and conditions of organizational silence which they find as "a threatening barrier before organizational change and development and a collective procedure that blocks developing a diversified organization," (Eroglu et.al., 2011: 100) explains silence as "intentional turnover of employees to communicate their ideas, opinions and thoughts to improve their jobs and their organization"

Mobbing

Later the mentioned concept started to be used by Dr. Peter Paul Heinmann, the Sweden scientist for the aggression committed in Sweden by a weaker student group against a stronger student (Davenport et.al., 2003; Leymann, 1996, Yldz et.al., 2011). The concept of mobbing at workplace was defined for the first time by Heinz Leymann, German employment psychologist in late 1980s, mobbing at workplace as subjection of one or rarely more persons by one or more persons (rarely more than four) every day and for several months systematically to emotionally harmful behaviors (Tengilimolu and Mansur, 2009). Leymann further emphasized that this sort of behaviors is workplace terror at the same time. This terror is composed of non-ethical communication and hostile behaviors directed by one or more persons against a single person (Leymann, 1996).

Mobbing does not arise suddenly in a workplace. This behavior form continues in the form of process and various

psychological factors arise and these affect the mobbing victim negatively. Mobbing arising in a workplace passes through the stages of definition, dispute, aggressiveness, organizational power and dismissal (Erdogan, 2009). Mobbing may happen in all sorts of workplaces whether public or private and any employee may be a victim of mobbing. Mobbing may be horizontal or vertical depending on hierarchical structure and organizational culture selected by the workplace. If hierarchy is high, mobbing becomes vertical; it becomes horizontal if it is lower. While the psychological violence committed in working environments committed from higher positions to lower positions or from lower positions to higher positions is called vertical or “hierarchical (vertical) violence”, the psychological violence committed between those with equal status is called “functional (horizontal) violence” (Erdogan, 2009) given these arguments the first hypothesis is:

H1: Organizational silence has an impact on turnover intention.
Mediating Effect of Mobbing on Organizational Silence and Turnover Intention

Mobbing in the workplace is a series of an act of organized emotional attacks that target specific human beings (Tetik, 2010). Mobbing practices are increases day by day in organizations. Within the business life, mobbing has been approached as all types of intimidation, conquering, depression and exclusion process towards a person or a group of people. It is generally intangible but sometimes tangible persecution manner which has been aiming to convert the active employees within the business life into passive ones or fade them out. Also explains as emotional disturbance, mobbing, by creating psychological pressure over the person who has been targeted, intentions to leave, to fade away the person's identity as an employee with regular, continuous and insisted persecution (Aldıg, 2011).

Although exposure to bullying often offsets turnover processes with thoughts about leaving which culminate in exiting the organization, the process is complex and far from predictable, depending upon several factors. In a similar way, the reasons given by targets for leaving will vary, as push and pull factors and the individuals perceptions of their situation will to some extent differ between individuals. Health did not change the relationship between both mobbing and turnover significantly. Three reasons for quitting stood out among reasons given by the bullied respondents: poor leadership, being exposed to negative behavior and health problems.

Schalkwyk et al. (2011) determine the role of mobbing as moderator in the relationship between workplace mobbing and turnover intention across sectors in South Africa and explains that mobbing by superiors is more frequent than bullying by colleagues. A significant relation exists between workplace mobbing and turnover intention. Role transparency, contribution to decision-making and relationship with superintendent moderates the relationship between mobbing by superiors and turnover intention. McCormack et al. (2009) their study explains that whether the relationship between workplace mobbing and intention to leave is mediated by affective commitment.

The rationale for this study is in fact to highlight and bring to surface the issue of workplace mobbing along with the negative consequences it has for the organizations at large, which usually remain undetected. These negative effects are evident in the form of dissatisfied and low-morale employees, which leads to a reduction in their productivity. Therefore, the presence of a fearful environment due to mobbing is directly related to harming the potential of the staff of organization. This may also avert their energies from imparting organizational goals to protecting their self-image instead.

The effects of psychological oppressions repeated intentionally and systematically on an individual are revealed in the form of accumulated harms created gradually. And examining the harms caused in an individual by mobbing in social terms; he/she is mistreated in psychological terms and approaches everybody with prejudice. This syndrome is one which reveals itself together with groundless fears occurring suddenly, very severe panic attack crises, feeling of death and loss of self control at the same time. The heaviest result of this syndrome is the loss of self confidence by the individual. Mobbing may cause weakening of the health and immunity system of the mistreated. Thus, it may cause the aggrieved to change job and suffer from many problems in her private life.

This may be extended to loss of job by the employee and at the extreme point and in the long-term exclusion in social terms and even committing suicide by the employee. For this reason, in cases that mobbing cannot be prevented, the aggrieved needs to receive clinic assistance (Tengilimoglu and Mansur, 2009). Due to all these negative effects on health, the personal and social relationships of the victims are likely to suffer. Moreover, these negative outcomes are not related to victims or targets of bullying alone. Witnesses of these behaviors also suffer, and their productivity may decline or get interrupted as they become more anxious when they hear about such incidents occurring to their colleagues (Andersson & Pearson, 1999). A climate of fear prevails among them who think of themselves as the next potential victims of such hostile behaviors (Yamada, 2008). Therefore, the second hypothesis is:

H2: Mobbing mediates the relationship between organizational silence and turnover intentions.

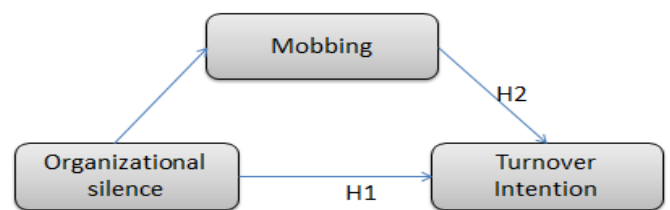


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

Sample and procedure

The data analyzed in this study were collected from employees working in different business organizations located in Pakistan. We relied on convenience sampling technique to select the business organizations and experience sampling

technique was used to select the employees as respondent. Within each organization, those employees were selected as respondents by simple random technique. This tenure was taken as criterion for the respondents to collect data. This time period was used to access that they have some experiences and incidents which formulate their belief and attachment. We have informed employees about the research purposes and assure them that their responses would be kept confidential. The questionnaires were dispatched in different business manufacturing organizations selected randomly and employees were asked to respond, and the questions are clear and understandable which might lead to minor adjustments to the wording of a few of the items. The sample selection process was continued until our required sample size has been achieved. 500 respondents were contacted and requested to participate in prevailing research, among them 324 responded well and accurately.

Measures

The survey of this study comprised of measures; these were designed to hold the various aspects of the concepts being investigated in this study. All the items against each variable i.e. organizational silence, Mobbing, turnover intentions are measured on five-point Likert scale given under every measure described below:

Instruments

Mobbing

Respondents were asked to answer based on their past or present experience of psychological contract violation. We examine the mediating role of this variable by using a scale of 5 items was designed by (Pranjic et al. 1979). The reliability of the scale was measured through Cronbach Alpha which is 0.89. This was also used and validated by (Meral et al. 2014) with 0.93 Cronbach Alpha. The scale was including 9 items and some of the exemplary items were as: (1) Does your work have too difficult phases? (2) Do you have to hurry to get your work done? (3) you have any influence on matters at work, which concern you? Responses were recorded on five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Higher scores represent a higher occurrence of psychological contract violation in the workplace.

Organizational silence

The role of organizational silence was measured by 10 items scale which has good psychometric properties and this scale was developed by (Meral et al. 2014). The reliability of the scale was measured through Cronbach Alpha which is 0.73. Some of the exemplary items were as: (1) : Since I consent to the decisions, I keep my thoughts to myself. (2) To be able to continue to work, I ignore adverse conditions. (3) I keep my opinions to myself at the resolving stage of the problems. (4) I keep my work-related information for myself as I fear from my leader's reaction (5) I hesitate to explain my views with a view to protect the continuity of business for missing issues. Responses were recorded on five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Higher scores represent a higher level of organizational commitment in the workplace.

Turnover Intentions

The role of employee turnover intentions was measured by the scale of Mobley et al. (1979). The scale was developed in line with mobbing (Pranjic et al. 1979) and organizational silence (Meral et al. 2014). A total of 12 items were used in the questionnaire to measure employee turnover intentions. The reliability of the scale was measured through Cronbach Alpha which is 0.83. All items were preceded by the statement in the place I work for exemplary items were included as (1) I am allowed to do anything to do a high quality job, (2) I am not encouraged to handle job-related problems by myself, (3) I can make changes on my job whenever I want. Responses were recorded using five-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Higher scores represent more presence of cynical behaviors.

Statistical technique

In order to test the proposed hypothesis, we will conduct hierarchical regression analyses.

DISCUSSIONS

The data analysis has been conducted comprehensively and results are presented here to analyze the proposed hypotheses accordingly. Structure equation modeling was applied to test the proposed hypotheses with the help of SPSS and AMOS. In order to conduct, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and reliability analysis, data has been entered in SPSS. The mean values for all the variables range from 3.93 to 4.87 and standard deviations range from .83 to .31. Cronbach Alpha was checked for the variables (organizational silence, mobbing and turnover intentions) and found reliable with the values .78, .82 and .91 respectively. Pearson correlation analysis was applied and found positive association which ranges from .485 to .82. All the variables are significantly correlated with one another at ($P < .01$).

Further, in order to test the significance of model according to the conceptual framework and to observe the estimates, statistical software AMOS was used. It is important to determine the fit indices for the model to perform data analysis. AMOS version 21 was used to check the fit indices and a precise criterion was employed to find out the fit. This criterion was contained some of fitness measures and these are: CMIN/df (Chi-Square value), GFI (Goodness of Fit Index), CFI (Comparative Fit Index), NFI (Normed Fit Index), TLI (Tucker Lewis Index) and RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation). These fitness measures are worthy at some recommended cut-off values. To have a good model fit Hair and others (2006) endorsed cut-off points. For GFI, CFI and TLI cut-off values are $\geq .90$, whereas the values for RMSEA must be equal or less than .07 (Hair et al., 2006). The model was now checked for fit indices and the values were improved as Goodness of Fit Index = 0.92, Comparative Fit Index = 0.91, Tucker Lewis Index = 0.90 and Normed Fit Index = 0.93. Whereas, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation = 0.053 which depicts that current model is good and acceptable model to proceed this study.

There is a positive relationship exists between organizational silence and employees' turnover intentions ($\beta = .130, P <$

.003) which further leads towards accepting hypothesis H1 stating that there exists positive significant relationship between organizational silence and turnover intentions. It shows that silence among employees at workplace leads towards employees' intent to quit at workplace. Moreover, mediating relationship also proved significant ($\beta = .241$, $P.000$). This significant relationship proves H2 true. It shows that mobbing mediated the relationship between organizational silence and employees' turnover intentions.

Theoretical implications

The most important contribution of this study is that it integrated social exchange theory. This theory supports the theoretical framework of the model which helps to explain the variables as in explaining mobbing and organizational silence. Social exchange theory explains the human relationships and social behavior are rooted in an exchange process. When employees reach at the flash point, there is no way to turn back. Therefore, organizations should do everything within their power to create and nurture a friendly, inclusive environment. Social exchange theory is more helpful this theory based on the reciprocity of relationship as discussed earlier. In the tasking environment of business organizations, mobbing has negative impact on the employees' behavior and turnover intentions. When an employee shows negative behavior towards another employee then according to social exchange theory the other employee will also shown negative intents, it will harm the organizational culture and significantly impact on employee turnovers. If an employee shown silent behavior, then the linkage between the CEO and employee becomes weaker.

Managerial Implications

Employee behavior is a key construct to helping today's managers in understanding the nature and direction of their relationships with employees. Our findings will suggest and facilitate employees working in business organizations when they confront the mobbing. In this state of disguises and disturbance they can concentrate on new opportunities overlooked previously. Employees lose their interest within organizational affairs while working at places where silence is encouraged, and employees are motivated to keep their mouth closed. The employees who opt to keep silent stop caring for their organization and do not even bother to solve the issues. This matter is even worst in service organizations where employees must directly interact with the customers. The managers, therefore, should be watchful for the silence of employees. The results of this study suggest that managers should keep in view the importance of voice of employees. They should also develop the employee evaluation procedures in such a way that motivate the employees to break their silence. The employees should be made assured of fair procedures and avoid mobbing within their organizations.

Limitations of study and future implications

The research paper has some limitations. Firstly, it is a cross-sectional study. Over a long period of time, the examination of organizational silence and turnover intentions and mediating role would unfold more reliable findings. Much work can be

done in the future by focusing on the respondent traits and on many variables, which can impact on person- perceptions. Till now, most of the research on organizational silence and mobbing and turnover intentions is done abroad not within Pakistan. Hence some cultural issues must be considered. All variables have been used as linear dimensional in this article. Various dimensions of these variables can also be added in order to in depth exploration and then more compound models can be added in. Common method bias is another limitation of this study. In future the mediating role of trust on supervisor between the organizational silence and turnover intentions may also be studied. The research was conducted with a small sample size of 500 respondents from business organizations only: future studies should include bigger samples from multiple sectors and cultures. The study was conducted with employees who are still working in the organization. Future study is needed to investigate the employees who had some bonding and attachment to the organization previously and now they are affected by mobbing of their colleagues and now they have turnover intention.

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