Original Article

Surveying the exposure level of intimidation (mobbing) behaviours of the football referees

SERKAN HACICAFEROĞLU¹; CEMAL GÜNDOĞDU²

¹Inonu University College of Physical Education and Sports, Malatya, TURKEY

²Firat University College of Physical Education and Sports, Elazig, TURKEY

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of psychological mobbing behaviors that the football referees within Turkey Football Federation are exposed to. The sampling of the study conducted by using a screening model is consisted of 374 referees, actively working in various leagues. The research data were collected by a Mobbing Scale for Football Referees. In the study were used descriptive statistics, Tukey test, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). As a result of the survey, it was found out that women compared to men, married referees to single referees, the referees with postgraduate education compared to the other educational groups, the referees of 23-27 age group compared to the other age groups, the referees of 1 to 4 tenure compared to other tenure groups, were more exposed to mobbing behaviors. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the mobbing behaviors according to the variable of gender, marital status, education, ages of the referees, and that there was no any significant difference according to the tenure variable. In addition, it was concluded that the participated referees were exposed to various mobbing behaviors at lower medium levels in total.

Key words: mobbing, psychological intimidation, referees, football referees.

Introduction

The intimidation (mobbing) can be experienced in any environment where there are managing and managed employees. However, it is not exactly known what the mobbing or the mobbing process is or how it is being experienced. In some cases, considering this experience as a workplace tradition brings the lack of knowledge about this matter in the forefront. It is very important for people to know that the mobbing, which causes significant losses with respect to business productivity and poor performance in the workplace, is not something usual in the working environment (Bulut, 2007).

It is being observed that today the importance of human relationships gradually increases at work environments. The efficiency of the social relations in the organizations has also gained importance as much as the productivity of the employees. The communication and social relationships of the employees with each other in any organization is the most important power that sustains the organization. The managers, who understood the importance of the employees in sustaining the business life, especially in recent years, have been looking for ways to make happy the employees at work (Gökçe, 2008). Valuing people in our modern management understanding where the human element gained an importance, is been done by obviously showing this. In this context, all kinds of intimidation behaviors against an individual indicate that this value is not given to employees (Yaman, 2009).

It is seen that the studies made on the mobbing behaviors began in Europe and later concentrated on the other countries. The concept of mobbing in the workplace was first described by the German employment psychologist Heinz Leymann at the end of the 1980 (Tınaz, 2006). And having an increasing number in the studies related to mobbing in the recent years, indicates that this fact has reached serious extent.

Mobbing is not a condition that occurs suddenly. It means a process. This process begins by targeting a certain person or persons at the workplace with injurious behaviors (Kirel, 2008). The person chosen as a target in the process of intimidation may become a person not respected and behaviors may occur which may damage the reputation of the person, selected as a target. In the process of intimidation there are hostile behaviors and unethical communication behaviors (Gökçe, 2008).

Is very important to notice the signs of mobbing in time and to take measures in order to create workplaces respectful to people as much as they are efficient and profitable. It is necessary to closely familiarize with the mobbing behaviors in order to be able to fight them in a right way (Baltaş, 2009). In this context, we

must develop a number of conditions that we can describe the behaviors or ill-treatment that the individuals face in their everyday working life as mobbing behaviors (Güngör, 2008).

In this context, Leymann defined the intimidation as a sort of a psychological terror, intimidation acts, a hostile and unethical communication emerging in a systematic manner, directed by one or several persons towards another one, the reason of which can be in a wide variety from a diversity of thought and belief to jealousy and discrimination of a gender. (Tınaz, 2006). After Leymann, the researchers have used this definition by expanding it. However, there is no any definition agreed upon on all hands (Gökçe, 2008).

One of the most important reasons underlying these problems, the scope of which is so very common, even deeply affect the person's mental health and work productivity, no doubt, are the emotional attacks, so far unnamed, kept in secret, but known to be intensely experienced at the workplace and which could be called as intimidation acts (Uzunçarsılı and Yoloğlu, 2007). In preventing this kind of behaviors in organizations, must be given importance to rational attitude and human resources. It is noted that the mobbing behaviors are seen lesser in organizations that apply this type of practice (Ocak, 2008).

The football referees, which constitute the content of the study, should feel themselves good both physically, as well as psychologically in order to be able to fulfill their duties. For the refereeing job, which is especially considered to be a risky profession (Hançerlioğlu, 1992), versatile features such as knowledge of the game, ability of communication and assessment is required. In addition to these features, a referee needs to know what the mobbing behaviors are which may adversely affect the refereeing profession and how he can cope with them. The referees, other than their professional knowledge and experience, should not be affected from the negative factors that may come from outside in order to take right decisions in an environment where the expectations of the large masses are for their side. Also, the referees decisions are being constantly discussed in the sports programs via the printed and the mass media and a sports agenda is being created which continues for weeks. The possible errors of the referees especially in the matches of the teams the fan base of which is more in number, are being magnified with the comments and it could be turned into lynching campaign. In this context and in this study, the perception of the active football referees serving in the high board of referees, towards the psychological mobbing behaviors that they are exposed to, were tried to be identified by considering some of the variables.

Method

The purpose of this study is to identify the exposure level of the active referees serving in the Turkish Football Federation to psychological mobbing behaviors. The research was conducted by using a screening model.

Population- Sampling

The population of study; it consists of total 638 classification referees, actively performing their duties in the professional and the amateur leagues of the Turkish Football Federation (Football Federation, 2012). And the sampling of the study is consisted of total 374 referees, chosen among the population with random selection and who has been performing their duties in various leagues of the Turkish Football Federation. When considering that the number required to be achieved in the small population of the descriptive research needs minimum 20% (Arlı & Nazik, 2001), it can be said that the number represents the population in the sampling.

Data Collection Tool

Article 21 of the "Mobbing Scale For Football Referees (MSFR)", prepared by Hacicaferoğlu and Gündoğdu (2013) was used to obtain the research data. The scale, having lined up the level of frequency of exposure to various mobbing behaviours as "5- Routinely, 4- Most of the time, 3- Occasionally, 2- Rarely, 1 - Never", intended to identify by a five-point scale. It was found out that the total variance explained by 21 items was 61,32, and the Cronbach 's alpha internal consistency coefficient was 0,92, while the load factor was between 0,50 and 0,86. And in this this study, the Cronbach 's alpha internal consistency coefficient was determined to be 0,93. And having a Cronbach 's alpha value over 0,70 in the survey, indicates that the scale is reliable (Arseven, 2001).

Data Analysis

In the study were used descriptive statistics, frequency, percent, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The degree of statistical significance was accepted as Alpha (α), and the level of significance as $p < 0.05$. The results obtained from the distributions have been tabulated and the findings have been interpreted and the required solutions have been suggested.

Findings and discussion

In this section are given the data obtained in the study of football referees and the statistical findings related to these data.

Table 1. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors

	N	Mean	Ss
Attacks on the Football Referees	374	1.95	.67

In the survey it was determined that the referees' exposure to the mobbing behaviors was at lower medium level with $X=1.95$ points. It can be said that although at lower medium level, the football referees in the sample were exposed to mobbing behaviors. The result that Gürpınar and Guven (2011) obtained in their study they have conducted supports our finding that the most common unsporting behaviors in terms of type of behavior to referees is the psychological pressure. We see that in his survey, Hacicaferoğlu (2010) noted that the rate of exposure to mobbing behaviors was at a lower medium level with $X=1.82$ points. This result is in line with the findings of the study. However, Alkan (2011) and Tüzel (2009), pointed out in their studies that the study participant's level of being exposed to mobbing behaviors was at low level.

Table 2. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors According to the Gender Variable

Gender Status	N	%	Mean	Ss	Sd	t-	p
Men	345	92.2	1.92	.66	372	-3.090	.002
Women	29	7.8	2.31	.66			
Total	374	100					$p<0.05$

It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the gender variable of the referees in the sample and the mobbing behaviors [$t=-3.090$, $p<.05$]. Regarding this issue, it can be said that the female referees with $X=2.31$ points are more exposed to mobbing behaviors compared to male referees ($X=1.92$). While in some studies carried out related to this issue was pointed out that women were more exposed to mobbing behaviors compared to men (Aydın & Özkul, 2007; Ceylan, 2005; Işık, 2007; Kök, 2006; Köse & Uysal, 2010), in some studies it was pointed out that men were more exposed to mobbing behaviors compared to women (Aktop, 2006; Bulut, 2007; Güneri, 2010; Gökçe & Oguz, 2009; Tüzel, 2009). In this case, having relatively low number of female referees participated to the survey, it can be said that in an environment dominated by men there is a more aggressive attitude against the weakness of the women (Leymann, 1993). Also, it is seen that Güneri (2010) and Turan (2006) in their survey, stated that there was a statistically significant difference between the gender variable and the psychological mobbing (Güneri, 2010; Turan, 2006). This result is in line with this finding of the study. Whereas we see that Aktop (2006), Tanoğlu (2006) and Yavuz (2007), in their survey, concluded that there wasn't any statistically significant difference.

Table 3. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors According to the Marital Status Variable

Marital Status	N	%	Mean	Ss	Sd	t-	p
Single	155	41.4	1.83	.61	372	-2.764	.006
Married	219	58.6	2.03	.69			
Total	374	100					$p<0.05$

It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the marital status variable of the referees and the mobbing behaviors [$t=-2.764$, $p<.05$]. It can be said that the female referees with $X=2.31$ points are more exposed to mobbing behaviors compared to male referees ($X=1.92$). On this matter it can be said that the married referees with $X=2.03$ points are more exposed to mobbing behaviors compared to single referees ($X=1.83$). In that case it can be said that the livelihood concerns and responsibilities of the married referees can be more than the concerns of the single referees and that they care more about their workplace responsibilities and the troubles the experience. In the surveys on the subject, it was determined that married employees are exposed to mobbing behaviors at a higher rate than the single employees (Aydın & Özkul, 2007; Kök, 2006; Köse & Uysal, 2010; Tüzel, 2009). These results have similarities with the findings of the survey. It was seen that Akkar (2010) and Hacicaferoğlu *et al.*, (2012), concluded that the unmarried employees experience more the feeling of mobbing compared to the married employees. Also Alkan (2011) in his study, points out that there is a significant relationship between marital status and mobbing. These finding seems to support this finding of the study. However, there are research results indicating that there aren't any statistically significant differences

between the marital status variable and mobbing behaviors. (Gökçe & Oguz, 2009; Güneri, 2010; Işık, 2007; Tanoğlu, 2006; Turan, 2006; Yavuz, 2007).

Table 4. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors According to the Education Variable

Educational Status	N	%	Mean	Ss	Sd	F	p	Tukey
(a) Secondary educ	13	3.5	1.72	.68	3	4.100	.007	d-a
(b) College	46	12.3	1.92	.69	370			
(c) License	265	70.9	1.95	.64	373			
(d) Postgraduate	50	13.4	2.18	.71				
Total	374	100					p<0.05	

It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the educational status variable of the referees and the mobbing behaviors [$F=4.100$, $p<0.05$]. While in some studies carried out related to this issue was pointed out that there was a significant difference between the relationship of education variable and the mobbing behaviors (Dilman, 2007; Karavardar, 2009; Köse & Uysal, 2010; Yavuz, 2007), and in some studies it was pointed out that there wasn't any significant difference (Gökçe & Oğuz, 2009; Hacicaferoğlu, 2010; Işık, 2007; Turan, 2006). In the study it was determined that the referees graduated from colleges and postgraduate studies perceived the mobbing behaviors at a lower medium level, whereas the referees graduated from high schools perceived the mobbing behaviors at a low level. As a result of Tukey test performed with a purpose to find the source of the difference, It can be said that the referees having a postgraduate education were more exposed to mobbing behaviors with $X=2.18$ points, compared to the referees having education at a secondary level ($X=1.71$). People having higher levels of education, can mean that they are one step ahead as being qualified. A person is able to find the opportunity to rise quickly within his working environment due to these features he has. It can be said that the presence of such referee in such a case may disturb the other referees or elements employed and may start a mobbing process against him. In some surveys carried out on the issue, it was seen that a conclusion was reached that the employees suffered mobbing behaviors had college or license education levels (Bulut, 2007; Crawford, 1997; Demircivi, 2008; Güneri, 2010; Hacicaferoğlu, 2010; Köse & Uysal, 2010; Özarallı & Torun, 2007; Turan, 2006). These data is in line with this finding we have found.

Table 5. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors According to the Age Variable

Age Status	N	%	Mean	Ss	Sd	F	p	Tukey
(a) 18-22 age	6	1.6	2.16	.56	4	3.673	.006	b-c b-d
(b) 23-27 age	83	22.2	2.33	.75	369			
(c) 28-32 age	137	36.6	1.85	.66	373			
(d) 33-37 age	131	35	1.88	.62				
(e) 38-42 age	17	4.5	2.04	.45				
Total	374	100					p<0.05	

It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the age variable of the referees in the sample and the mobbing behaviors [$F=3.673$, $p<0.05$]. It was seen that the results of some studies conducted support these findings (Aktop, 2006; Güneri, 2010; Orhan, 2009). However, it is seen that in some studies there are results that there is not any significant difference (Işık, 2007; Koç & Bulut, 2009; Köse & Uysal, 2010; Turan, 2006). It was determined that the referees of the age group in the sample, perceived mobbing behaviors at a lower medium level. It can be said that as the result of the Tukey test, the referees of 23-27 age group perceived more mobbing behaviors with $X=2.33$ points compared to the referees of 28-32 age group ($X=1.85$) and the referees of 33-37 age group ($X=1.88$). In this case, it can be said that the referees in the age group of 23-27 not having an experience in perceiving the mobbing behaviors, gain experience in this matter with the advancement of age and thus become able to control the feelings of mobbing, occurring due to the anger in their surroundings. In some studies on the subject matter, it was observed that a result was reached that the employees in the age group of 21-30 experienced more feelings of mobbing compared to the other age groups (Güneri, 2010; Hacicaferoğlu *et al.*, 2012; Köse & Uysal, 2010), whereas in some studies it was detected that the mobbing behaviors were more experienced at the ages under 30 according to the age variable (Bahçe, 2007; Dilman, 2007; Kök, 2006; Orhan, 2009; Ögüt, 2007). These results seem to support this finding of the survey. And it was seen that despite these results, Cengiz (2008), in his survey, reached the conclusion that as age increases, the perceived mobbing dimension increases as well, whereas Ceylan (2005) reached the conclusion that the mobbing act was seen between 40 to 55 age range.

Table 6. Level of Exposure of the Referees to Mobbing Behaviors According to the Tenure Variable

Tenure Status	N	%	Mean	Ss	Sd	F	p	Tukey
(a) 1-4 years	27	7.2	2.15	.63	4	1.292	.273	----
(b) 5-8 years	92	24.6	1.91	.73	369			
(c) 9-12 years	130	34.8	1.94	.68	373			
(d) 13-16 years	107	28.6	1.90	.61				
(e) 17-20 years	18	4.8	2.16	.62				
<i>Total</i>	374	100					p>0.05	

It was determined that there was not any statistically significant difference between the tenure variable of the referees and the mobbing behaviors [$F=1.292$, $p>.05$]. It was seen that the results of some studies that the tenure of the participants and the rate of exposure to mobbing were in line with this finding of the survey (Gökçe & Oğuz, 2009; Işık, 2007; Turan, 2006). However, it is being also observed that there are surveys showing a significant difference (Dilman, 2007; Hughes, 2001). Moreover, it can be said that the referees employed between 1 to 4 years ($X=1.85$) and between 17 to 20 years ($X=1.85$) perceived more mobbing behaviors compared to the referees of other tenure groups. In the results of some survey conducted regarding the matter, it is seen that the employees were exposed to psychological mobbing acts during the first years of their professional lives (Hacicaferoğlu, 2010; Tüzel, 2009). These data obtained is in line with this finding of our survey. However, there are research results expressing that the employees having longer working years and experience, perceive more mobbing behaviors at their working environment (Ceylan, 2005; Gökçe & Oğuz, 2009; Gürpınar & Güven, 2011).

Conclusion and recommendations

In the conclusion of this study conducted in order to determine the levels of exposure to psychological mobbing behaviors of the classification referees in the sampling, it was determined that the female referees with $X=2.31$ points compared to the male referees, the married referees with $X=2.03$ points compared to single referees, referees having postgraduate education with $X=2.18$ points compared to the referees of the other educational groups, the referees in the age group of 23-27 with $X=2.33$ point compared to the referees of the other age groups, referees having tenure of 1 – 4 years with $X=2.15$ point compared to the referees of other tenure groups, were more exposed to mobbing behaviors. A conclusion was reached that there was a significant difference ($p<0.05$) between the levels of exposure to mobbing behaviors of the referees according to the variables of gender, marital status, education, age, whereas there wasn't any significant difference ($p>0.05$) according to the variable of tenure. Moreover, a conclusion was reached that the participated referees were exposed to various mobbing behaviors at a lower medium level ($X=1.95$) in total. This situation can be interpreted in a way that though at a lower medium level, the referees in the sample were exposed to mobbing behaviors during their professional lives. In addition, having the case of lower medium levels of exposure to mobbing behaviors and not having higher levels, it can be said that the referees didn't designated it with the thought that various factors could adversely affect their future professional lives. In this context, the Central Referees' Board, which has the position of managers of the referees, must be able to withstand the factors which will put pressure on the referees. Management decisions should be at an equitable and fair for all referees, the decisions taken by the federation must be impartially applied in an integrity by all its boards. In addition, the rules to be applied during the referee assignments and classification upgrade, should be more objective. An awareness should be ensured in order to avoid the negative reflections, the administration (RBT) should identify the presence of all kinds of mobbing behaviors that will affect the performance of the referees in order to cope with them, will organize ongoing programs about the psychological mobbing to the referees by organizing training, lectured by experts. In addition, the referees should not bow to pressure coming from various groups and must ensure the implementation of sanctions in a consistent manner, equally to everyone, without bending the rules. Moreover, the comments made in the sport public opinion must be made in a more constructive way. The comments should be made more objectively and in a scientific form, the charges should be avoided. Especially sports commentators should refrain from comments that can affect the referees' life outside of the refereeing.

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