

## Research Article

# A Field Research to Determine the Effect of Mobbing on Organizational Trust

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### Abstract

This research was done to measure the effects of mobbing on organizational trust by assessing the levels of perception of the mobbing problem affecting employees in the manufacturing sector of large-scale enterprises operating in the iron and steel industry in Karabük province of Türkiye. The absence of similar studies, conducted in the manufacturing sector in literature makes this study very valuable for the participating firm, and other companies in the industry to understand organizational trust, employee satisfaction, and ultimately increase productivity. As a result of this research, it was determined that employees were exposed to moderate levels of mobbing activities, and their organizational trust levels were reasonable. Additionally, it has been determined that mobbing affects the trust in the organization to a higher extent. As the employees' exposure to mobbing increases, trust in their organization decreases adversely.

**Keywords:** Psychological harassment, emotional harassment, mobbing, deviant behaviors, organizational trust

**JEL Classification Codes:** M11, M12, M14, M19

## Mobbingin Örgütsel Güven Üzerindeki Etkisinin Belirlenmesine Yönelik Bir Alan Araştırması

### Öz

Sanayi sektöründe çalışanları etkileyen mobbing sorununun, çalışanlar tarafından algılanma düzeyini ortaya koyarak ve bunun örgütsel güven üzerindeki etkisini belirlemek amacıyla gerçekleştirilen bu araştırma, Karabük ilindeki büyük ölçekli bir işletme çalışanlarıyla gerçekleştirilmiştir. Alan yazında imalat sektöründe yapılmış benzer çalışmaların nadir bulunması, bu çalışmaya katılan firma ve sektördeki diğer şirketler için kurumsal güveni, çalışan memnuniyetini ve sonuçta üretimi artırmanın önemini anlamak açısından oldukça faydalı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Araştırma sonucunda, çalışanların orta düzeyde mobbinge maruz kaldıkları ve örgütsel güven düzeylerinin, yine orta düzeyde bulunduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca, mobbing ortamının örgüte olan güveni oldukça yüksek oranda etkilediği ve mobbinge uğrama düzeyi arttıkça, iş görenin işletmeye olan güvenin de azaldığı belirlenmiştir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Psikolojik taciz, duygusal taciz, mobbing, sapkın davranışlar, örgütsel güven

**Jel Sınıflandırma Kodları:** M11, M12, M14, M19

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## 1. Introduction

Workplace Bullying (WPB), or Workplace Mobbing (WPM), is one of the major threats that most managers and workers have faced in recent years. Occupational mobbing is defined as a form of negative social pressure on a coworker by one or more individuals over a repeated, targeted, and extended period, resulting in the victim becoming powerless, withdrawn, unproductive, and sometimes combative (Leymann, 1996; Vartia, 2002; Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf & Cooper, 2011; Krishna, Soumyaja & Joseph, 2024). While the World Health Organization defines mobbing as psychological violence (World Health Organization, 2022), Leymann (1990), co-defines bullying as “ganging up against someone” and “psychic terror.” While WPB has been defined differently by different researchers in the field, almost all of them include the factors of mobbing’s recurrence, detrimental effects on the victims, the prey’s difficulty defending herself or himself, and its psychological and economic harm on the sufferer. According to researchers, WPB activities do not only have psychological but also physical dimensions to them (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). WPM behaviors may include shouting, insulting, blaming, shaming, hostile body language, and other deleterious activities. In some extreme cases, physical or direct threats and altercations push individuals into criminal and suicidal behaviors (Leymann, 1996; Cowie, Naylor, Rivers, Smith & Pereira, 2002; Praslova, Crucci & Stokes, 2022). Although it is not the focus of this study, the outcome of WPB causes increased absenteeism and high employee turnarounds for the organizations. This is why WPB has physical, psychological, and economic dimensions that must be addressed.

Historically, bullying has been associated with school kids; especially with high school-age children. This is why in the 1970s, Swedish doctor Peter Paul Heinemann and academician Dr. Dan Olweus coined the word bullying to define the aggressive behaviors displayed by children (Vickers, 2012). From this initial research, Sweden established itself as one of the pioneer countries in researching school bullying and WPB. German psychiatrist Heinz Leymann, like his colleagues, was originally researching schoolyard bullying and turned his attention to WPB issues during the late 1980s. Leymann’s academic publication in the 1990s, and British journalist Andrea Adams’ BBC broadcasts about WPB captured the public’s attention.

As a result of these publications, the WPB became one of the most attention-worthy issues alongside human rights, feminism, and environmental issues. After understanding how WPB influences employees' health and finances, it has become the focus of many national and international labor agencies, organizations, and researchers. Following Swedish and other European examples, a nonprofit support agency was specifically established to defend and advocate for the victims of bullying and guide employers, researchers, unions, and policymakers in the USA on how to prevent bullying practices. Drs. Ruth and Gary Namie, a clinical psychologist and a business administration scholar founded the Workplace

Bullying Institute (WBI) about 27 years ago to conduct periodic surveys, research, and share this compiled information with various involved parties since 2007 on bullying issues (Namie, 2014; Namie, 2021). Recognizing its importance, the National Institute of Health (NIH) in the USA announced October as National Bullying Awareness Month, and the Canadian Institute of Workplace Bullying Resources, a similar organization in that country dealing with WBI, designated October 13-19 as WPB Awareness Week.

In parallel with the developments in today's competitive business environment, the need for organizations to have highly motivated employees increased greatly (Balun & Dinçay, 2023). To boost productivity in this competitive environment, organizations must attempt to eradicate issues such as mobbing that are believed to erode worker productivity, decrease trust in the employer, increase employee dissatisfaction, and decrease corporate profitability. This is why organizational trust is one of the most important elements that make a person emotionally and psychologically feel safe and secure, so one can, without any impediment, socially interact with others and function as a fully functioning person in the workplace (Gibbs, 1972; Mishra & Morrissey, 1990). According to Laschinger, Shamian, and Thompson (2001), a trusting environment promotes teamwork, increases productivity, and improves performance, employee satisfaction, and commitment to the organizations that employees work for. Researchers also point out the fact that employees working in a trusting environment tend to be more innovative, loyal, punctual, and productive (Cook & Wall, 1980; Hartzler, 2003; Çelik, Turunç & Beğenirbaş, 2011; Zak, 2017).

As stated in a recent article published in Harvard Business Review, 48.6% of Americans and about 30% of the global labor force face some workplace mobbing that influences their organizational trust, productivity, and employee turnover of organizations (Zak, 2017; Praslova, Carucci & Stokes, 2022). Many factors such as personality types, ethnic composition, and power distance arrangements of organizations influence the presence of mobbing activities in various studied countries. This is why we may see higher WPM activities in ethnically diverse countries like the USA and the UK. Its measurements are calculated to be at 46 to 55% in India and 17% in Germany (Zak, 2017). Regardless of these rate fluctuations and the degrees of severity of the mobbing, job-force harassment is an issue to be reckoned with by all. After all, WPB is an issue that everyone or their loved ones may face in their lifetime. It also has the potential to adversely affect employees, decrease their productivity, and cause a drop in the profitability of corporations.

One of the most important factors that ensure trust in an organization is the employees' relationship with their managers, which some of the research suggests reduces or eliminates the stress of bullying and allows employees to focus on their jobs better (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999). Some studies suggest that the absence of trust in management increases employees' vulnerability to bullying, and in return,

they focus on their self-preservation or self-defense, while not focusing so much on their jobs and corporate well-being (Ashforth & Lee, 1990; Mayer Davis & Schoorman, 1995; Gavin, 2005; Gould-Williams, 2007). In this study, we tried to determine the influence of mobbing on organizational trust and measure the degree of this effect on our sample group.

The studies and historical facts that are mentioned above, personal experiences, and observations present enough reasons why this research is very important for businesses, communities, academicians, and individuals alike. As presented in the following literature review section, there are numerous studies conducted in healthcare, higher education, and other prominent industry settings on WPM, but there are only a few investigations in the blue-collar manufacturing industries; especially, the steel industry where we conducted our research. This research will contribute to the scientific literature on mobbing and the organizational trust area while attempting to fill this neglected industry, assessing the presence of mobbing and its influence on organizational trust in a manufacturing setting. We will also compare our measured mobbing levels with the national and international rates.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature review reveals that the scientific work and knowledge in the field of management and other related areas on bullying and institutional trust are rich. Nonetheless, only a few of them are conducted in manufacturing settings, and most of these studies investigate mobbing and trust issues separately without any comparative work. Thus, this study and a handful of others are unique because they do not only investigate organizational mobbing or trust individually but rather study their relationship with each other. Even if the topic is the same, there is always a need for further niche research since every location, institution, industry, and culture is unique and different from one another. Since many examples of mobbing and corporate trust-related research conducted on blue-collar workers in the steel manufacturing industry are rare, we reviewed and documented literature on other industries such as healthcare and higher education institutions for the literature review section.

The review below is presented under three different headings of the relationship between ‘organizational trust and mobbing, mobbing, and organizational trust.’ Since more studies are conducted on the individual areas of ‘organizational trust’ and ‘workplace harassment,’ the researcher was compelled to include these individual areas of literature review along with the directly related studies to present a wholesome picture.

### **2.1. Organizational Trust and Mobbing**

Researchers in Nigeria investigated mobbing and organizational trust-related research on 200 Environmental Health and Safety professionals using a survey methodology (Ibrahim, Na’ibi & Usman, 2021). A similar study was conducted by Erdoğan and Yıldırım (2017), on 479 healthcare professionals in Türkiye.

Scandinavian scientists Einarsen S, Matthiesen S, and Skogstad A. have undertaken extensive studies in the healthcare industry, and in all three studies, the researchers found a direct relationship between mobbing and work deviant behaviors and an inverse correlation between mobbing and organizational trust (Einarsen, Matthiesen & Skogstad, 1998; Erdoğan & Yıldırım, 2017; Ibrahim, Na'ibi, & Usman, 2021). These studies showed that the increased presence of mobbing resulted in more work deviant behaviors of increased tardiness, absenteeism, and drop in productivity while WPB decreased organizational trust in an inverse relationship. Erdoğan and Yıldırım's research showed that females, compared to males were more prone to mobbing and Einarsen et al's research indicated lower-ranked healthcare professionals such as nurses and paramedics were more prone to mobbing than doctors, higher-ranked managers, and administrators.

## 2.2. Mobbing

Periodic WBI surveys reveal that bullying is part of American contemporary lives, and despite the presence of non-discrimination laws, over 90% of surveys indicate that people are in favor of additional laws to prevent mobbing and create healthier work environments (Namie, 2014; Namie, 2021). These WBI surveys calculate that the percentage of people who are targeted by or are witnesses to WPB incidents is around 90% of the total American workforce.

As far as genders are concerned, these surveys show that about 70% of bullies are male, while 30% of them are female. The victims' composition on the other hand is just the opposite of the bullies' composition. The victims of males are about 60% female and 40% male, while female bullies' targets are 70% female and 30% male. As we see from these statistics, regardless of who the perpetrators are, many of the victims are always females.

One of the most comprehensive literature reviews on the topic of mobbing was done by Ludmila N.P., Ron C, and Caroline S. investigating the manifestation of bullying in workplaces and ways to stop this workplace menace (Ludmila, Ron & Caroline, 2022). Using the WBI's data, and Dr. Ludmille's 25+ years of research, this study eloquently details WPB, how to stop it and create a healthier organizational culture. Ludmille et al in their study define bullying and identify 15 different futures of it in their article.

According to a national study conducted in the USA by Jayaratne, Vinokur-Kaplan, Nagda, and Chess (1996), using 633 employees associated with the National Association of Social Workers, discovered that female Social Workers were more susceptible to mobbing than males. This finding agrees with the WBI's and other findings. Among all participants, 42.8% reported receiving verbal abuse, 17.4% physical threats, and 2.8% were targets of physical assaults-resulting in the total prevalence of mobbing among Social Workers at 63%. Whitaker (2012) conducted similar research with Social Workers in the USA and discovered a similar rate of 58% prevalence of mobbing activity taking place in this industry. A 5% drop in

WPB incidents from 1996 to 2012 may be associated with more public awareness, added legal regulations put in place, and educational awareness campaigns. Another study was carried out in another female-dominant industry of Registered Nurses by Vessey, Demarco, Gaffney, and Budin (2009) in the USA. This investigation measured the prevalence of mobbing at 70%, while another study carried out by Elewa, and El Banan, (2019) in Egypt determined the mobbing rate of 57.4% among Egyptian Registered nurses. This shows how the same industry may display different rates of WPM activities in two countries due to variable differences such as the application of dissimilar laws, the presence of different corporate cultures, and the ethnic composition of employees.

One of the most unique studies about mobbing was conducted on 262 full-time ethnic and minority professionals who were members of the National Association of African American Human Resources Professionals, Hispanic Master of Business Administration (MBA) Associations, Loyola University Chicago Alumni Associations, and National Black MBA Association of Illinois, in America regarding WPB. The research discovered that 97% of all the participants experienced some form of WPB during the previous five years, and 15% of the total participants experienced frequent WPB. This study also indicates that the increased frequency of bullying adversely decreased trust and confidence in the organization (Fox & Stallworth, 2005). These higher WPB incident statistics are an indication that in America, minorities and Blacks are facing more bullying than the average American regardless of their educational levels and the higher positions they hold in their organizations.

Another unique and similar cross-sectional study was done by Bergbom, Vartiavaananen, and Kinnunen, (2015). Testing 186 natives against 183 immigrants, working in a transport company in Finland, researchers tried to measure the different experiences of WPM activity between these two groups. As a result of this investigation, the researchers found that immigrants who come from closer to the host country considered themselves to be targets of WPB three times more than the natives, while immigrants coming from culturally distant countries saw themselves as targets eight times more than the natives. Both Bergbom et al (2015) and Fox and Stallworth (2005) studies conducted on minorities in America and immigrants in Finland, show that minorities and immigrants are more targets of WPB than their native counterparts.

According to Nielsen, Matthiesen, and Einarsen (2010), the prevalence of WPB in Europe without Scandinavian countries was found at 15.7%. As mentioned in the introduction part of this research, in Sweden according to Leymann's initial work, WPB was estimated at 25% (Leymann, 1990). Rayner and Hoel (1997) found the percentage of workers who were affected by the WPB in the UK was 50%.

Although no organization like the WBI of the USA in Türkiye conducts periodic surveys to measure national bullying rates, there is comprehensive research which was carried out by Aytac, Bozkurt, Bayram, Yildiz, Aytac, Sokullu Akinci, and

Bilgel (2011). This research is instrumental work for us to compare our findings to benchmark the levels of mobbing activities in different organizations as opposed to the Turkish-national level. According to this national-level mobbing study, harassment prevalence in Türkiye was found to be 79%, while criminal violence was measured at 44.8%.

### 2.3. Organizational Trust

Organizational trust was investigated by Paul J. Zak of Harvard Business Review titled, *The Neuroscience of Trust* (Zak, 2017). Drawing his data from Gallop's decades-long work, the author establishes a strong direct correlation between organizational trust and increased productivity, quality of products and services, and profitability of the organizations. It is not a coincidence that according to the 2016 Global CEO survey, 55% of the participating individuals saw a lack of trust in their organization as a threat to their corporate growth. Further, Dr. Zak combined his management and economic study with the practice of Physiology. Based on earlier research conducted on rodents, which showed increased amounts of oxytocin when animals trusted others in their proximity, he wanted to measure this finding on his participants' brains to measure their level of oxytocin. Continuing his over-a-decade timeline research in vivo, and the field, Dr. Zak discovered that employees in high-trust organizations are 74% less stressed, 106% more energetic, 50% more productive, used 13% fewer sick days, were 79% more engaged, 29% more satisfied and 40% less burnt out than their counterparts working in a low-trust organizational environment (Zak, 2017).

According to this research, to create an organization with a trusting environment, the leadership must first recognize employees' hard work and excellence. Secondly, they must create a "challenge-stress" environment, where challenging but attainable goals are set. Third, they must be flexible and freedom to do their job as they wish, since they know their jobs better than the others. While oversight and debriefing are necessary, autonomy promotes innovation, and micromanagement erodes the trust environment in organizations. The fourth thing to do to create a trusting work environment, organizations need to enable employees to do 'job-crafting,' which means allowing them to do what they do best. Sharing information and attempting to build relationships with them are the fifth and sixth things to do in this task. The seventh thing to do is to establish a wholesome relationship with employees, meaning establishing associations that are both professional and personal with them. Last but most importantly, the leadership must show their vulnerabilities. Suggesting that leaders in high-trust organizations do not just tell their colleagues what to do, they also know how to seek help when needed. The leaders asking for help create cooperation and induce oxytocin, which establishes a trusting work environment (Zak, 2017).

The other organizational trust-related studies conducted in the healthcare industry in Malaysia and other countries found an adverse relationship between trust and workforce deviant behaviors, suggesting lack of trust was causing an increase in

deviant behaviors and less embeddedness at the workplace (Lawrance & Robinson, 2007; Akanni, Omisile & Oduaran 2018; Yusof, Imm & Zawawi 2019; Shukla & Kark, 2020; Abbasi & Ismail, 2022).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Purpose of the Study

This study aims to determine the effects of mobbing on organizational trust by measuring the level of perception of mobbing affecting employees in the iron and steel manufacturing sector. Within this framework of this purpose, the following topics were explored:

- Determine the direction of the relationships between the sub-dimensions of mobbing and organizational trust.
- Determine the level of sub-dimensions of mobbing and organizational trust in the sample company that is being tested.
- Determine the differences between mobbing and organizational trust in terms of demographic variables.

#### 3.2. Population of the Research and Sample Selection

The population of the research consists of employees working in the iron and steel industry in the Karabük province of Türkiye. It was determined that there was a total of 256 employees on the payroll of the company at the time when the research was conducted. Since it is difficult to reach all employees for scheduling and other conflicting reasons, rather than the whole population of the firm, a random sampling technique was used for data collection. The number of people who needed to be sampled was calculated by using the sampling table developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to this calculation and the ensuing table, the sampling population needed out of the 256 total employees, at least 154 participants needed to take part in this research: considering  $\alpha=0.05$  significance, and  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error. To obtain a more accurate outcome, 168 employees were recruited to volunteer in this study which is detailed in the data collection section. The demographic characteristics of the employees participating in this research are presented below in Table 1.

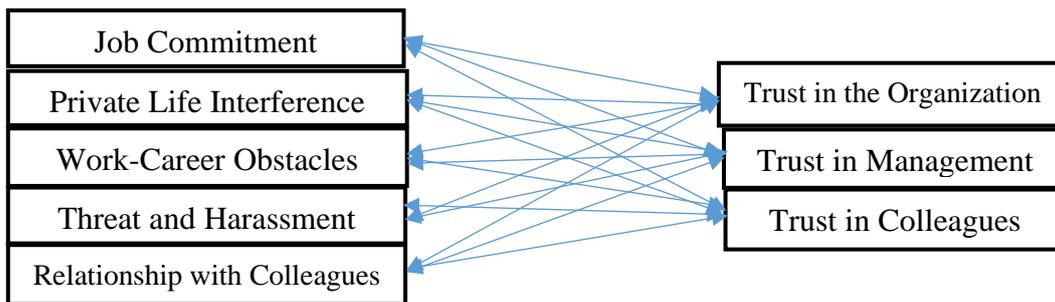
**Table 1: Participants Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic Characteristics	Variables	n	%
Gender	Female	11	6,5
	Male	157	93,5
Age	21-30 Years	45	26,7
	31-40 Years	73	42,8
	41 Years and Up	50	29,7
Marital Status	Married	141	83,8

	Single	27	16,0
Educational Status	Elementary School	18	10,7
	Middle School	25	14,88
	High School	59	35,1
	Associate Degree	41	24,4
	Bachelor's Degree or Higher	25	14,88
<b>Total</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.3. Research Model and Hypothesis

In line with the purpose of the research, the relational screening model was preferred in this study. The independent variables of the research are mobbing and its sub-dimensions: relationships with colleagues, threats and harassment, work and career-related obstacles, interference with private life, and work commitment. The dependent variables are determined as organizational trust and its sub-dimensions: trust in colleagues, trust in the manager, and trust in the business.



**Figure 1: Research Model**

The hypotheses envisaged within the scope of the study were determined as follows:

H1: Mobbing has a significant effect on organizational trust.

H2: There is a significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of mobbing and the sub-dimensions of organizational trust.

H3: Mobbing sub-dimension has a significant and negative effect on trust in the organization.

### 3.4. Data Collection

After obtaining institutional ethical committee approval from Karabük University's ethical board dated 29/08/2023, the research data was collected using a face-to-face survey format to ensure reliability and eliminate possible errors. With permission of the corporate management team, the researcher, a corporate host employee, and a graduate student team received employees at the employee entrance and

conducted face-to-face surveys for about one hour each shift for a few days in the reception area. These data collection sessions continued during employees' lunch hours to complete all participating employees' data collection sessions in their lunchroom. The survey form included four demographic questions to determine the participants' gender, age, marital status, and educational status.

A widely used and highly regarded mobbing scale was used to ascertain the mobbing levels of the participants. The mobbing scale was developed by Aiello et al. (2008), and its Turkish adaptation was done by Laleoğlu and Özmete (2013). The adapted scale consists of a total of five sub-dimensions and a total of 38 items. The breakdown of the scale consists of 17 'Relationships with Colleagues' items, seven 'Threats and Harassment' items, eight 'Workplace and Career-Related Obstructions' items, four 'Interference with Private Life' items, and finally two 'Work Commitment' items. Laleoğlu and Özmete (2013), in their calculations, found the Kaiser-Meyer-Ohlin (KMO) value of the scale to be 0.89 and the reliability level of  $\geq 0.70$ .

The organizational trust scale, which was used to determine the level of trust of employees in the business, was developed by Çalışkan (2021). This scale consists of 3 sub-dimensions of seven 'Trust in Colleagues' items, five 'Trust in the Manager' items, and five 'Trust in the Organization' items, totaling 17 questions. The fit values of the scale, Minimum Discrepancy Function by Degrees of Freedom (CMIN/DF)=2.61; Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA)=0.03; Nonlinear Factor Analysis (NFA)=0.96; Goodness of Fit Index (GFI): 0.96; Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)= 0.95, and Comparative Fit Index (CFI)=0.98 were found to be at an acceptable level. Additionally, the internal consistency of the scale in Cronbach Alpha was found reliable at  $\geq 0.70$ .

### 3.5. Data Analysis

A widely accepted Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software program was used for the analysis of the data collected within the scope of this research. In this context, first, the structural validity and reliability of the scales were tested. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted for construct validity. For testing the construct reliability, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were examined. In the second stage, the exposure of business and participants to mobbing, and additionally their level of trust in the organization were determined with the arithmetic mean from descriptive analysis. In the third stage, the effect of mobbing on organizational trust was measured with simple and multiple regression analyses.

## 4. Findings

As we can see in Table 1 above, a total of 168, 11 women and 157 men participated in this research. 141 of the employees who contributed to this study were married and 27 were single. The age demographics of this sample reflect the general

population of this firm. 45 of the participants were 21-30 years old, 73 of them were 31-40 years old, and finally, 50 of the subjects were 41 years old and over. Their distribution is according to their educational status; 18 of the employees have primary school degrees, 25 secondary school degrees, 59 high school degrees, 41 associate degrees, and 25 undergraduate and graduate degrees.

#### 4.1. Validity and Reliability of the Scales

EFA was used to test the structural validity of the mobbing and organizational trust scales used in this research, and Cronbach Alpha coefficients were analyzed to test their reliability. In this context, the EFA and reliability results determined regarding mobbing are presented below, in Table 2.

**Table 2: EFA and Reliability Results for the Mobbing Scale**

Variables	Phrases	Faktor Loading	Eigenvalues	Variance Explanation Rates	Cumulative Variance	$\alpha$
<b>Relationship with Coworkers</b>	MO5	0,967	15,367	40,440	40,440	0,990
	MO6	0,963				
	MO2	0,963				
	MO1	0,960				
	MO7	0,960				
	MO15	0,953				
	MO4	0,950				
	MO13	0,945				
	MO3	0,941				
	MO12	0,932				
	MO11	0,929				
	MO10	0,924				
	MO17	0,907				
	MO9	0,883				
	MO14	0,881				
MO18	0,858					
MO16	0,856					
<b>Job and Career-Related Obstacles</b>	MO36	0,889	8,537	22,466	62,906	0,956
	MO34	0,887				
	MO33	0,881				
	MO37	0,860				
	MO32	0,856				
	MO35	0,847				
	MO38	0,813				
MO31	0,770					
<b>Threats and Harassment</b>	MO20	0,954	5,125	13,486	76,393	0,981
	MO19	0,951				

	MO8	0,951				
	MO28	0,949				
	MO21	0,943				
	MO24	0,898				
	MO22	0,896				
<b>Interference With Personal Lives</b>	MO23	0,831	1,976	5,200	81,592	0,878
	MO26	0,816				
	MO25	0,799				
	MO27	0,777				
<b>Loyalty for Workplace</b>	MO30	0,840	1,148	3,022	84,614	0,916
	MO29	0,827				
<b>General Cronbach's Alpha Value</b>						<b>0,931</b>
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Value</b>						<b>0,920</b>
<b>Bartlett test:<math>\chi^2</math></b>					<b>12277,482</b>	<b>0,000</b>

The EFA test with varimax rotation was applied to the data obtained from the participants. The KMO value of the scale was 0.920 and the Bartlett value was significant as  $p < 0.01$ . According to this value, the data collected from 168 volunteering employees was deemed sufficient to perform the EFA calculations. The total variance rate of the mobbing scale was determined as 84.614%, and it is understood that the answers received were sufficient in terms of responding to the problem of this research. The scale showed a 5-dimensional structure, as constructed in its original structure. The factor loadings of the statements were  $\geq 0.35$ , and the factor loadings of the data set were found to be at an acceptable level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The overall reliability coefficient of the scale was found to be highly reliable at  $\alpha = 0.931$  (Akgül & Çevik, 2003).

**Table 3: EFA and Reliability Results for the Organizational Trust Scale**

Variables	Phrases	Faktor Loadings	Eigenvalues	Variance Explanation Rates	Cumulative Variance	$\alpha$
<b>Trust in Colleagues</b>	T4	0,919	6,498	38,225	38,225	0,946
	T3	0,903				
	T5	0,901				
	T6	0,840				
	T1	0,830				
	T7	0,828				
	T2	0,818				
<b>Trust in the Management Team</b>	T9	0,960	4,581	26,945	65,171	0,984
	T12	0,955				
	T8	0,954				
	T11	0,952				

	T10	0,950				
<b>Trust in the Workplace</b>	T15	0,956	3,235	19,028	84,199	0,955
	T14	0,952				
	T13	0,923				
	T17	0,887				
	T16	0,885				
<b>Genel Cronbach's Alpha</b>						<b>0,821</b>
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)</b>						<b>0,843</b>
<b>Bartlett testi:χ<sup>2</sup></b>					<b>4720,821</b>	<b>0,000</b>

According to the EFA results displayed in Table 3, the KMO value of the scale was  $0.9843 > 0.60$  and the Bartlett test of sphericity gave significant results at the  $p < 0.01$  level. According to these obtained values, it was concluded that the data collected for 17 items was suitable for the factor analysis (Kan & Akbaş, 2005). The scale shows a 3-factor structure with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and a total variance explanation rate of 84.199%. Considering that a variance of at least 55% is regarded as a sufficient value in social sciences (Scherer, Wiebe, Luther & Adams, 1988), it can be said that the variance explanation rate of the organizational trust scale is sufficient. However, the researcher was careful to ensure that the factor load values of the scale were  $\geq 0.35$  as recommended (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu & Büyüköztürk, 2016). We can also see from the same table that the factor load values were greater than 0.35. In addition, based on the reliability coefficient being  $> 0.70$ , it was accepted that the organizational trust scale was highly reliable (Kalaycı, 2010).

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics

In this part of the study, the participants' exposure to mobbing and organizational trust levels were measured. As we can see from the values from Table 4, employees' exposure to mobbing and organizational trust levels of 1.00-1.80 were regarded as 'strongly disagree;' between 1.81-2.60 'disagree;' 2.61-3.40, 'partially agree;' 3.41-4.20, 'agree' and 4.21-5.00 'strongly agree' (Özdamar, 2001). Please see the result displayed in Table 4.

**Table 4: Findings on Organizational Mobbing and Organizational Trust**

Variables	n	Min.	Max.	$\bar{X}$	SS
<b>Mobbing</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>1,29</b>	<b>4,66</b>	<b>2,926</b>	<b>0,702</b>
Relationship with Coworkers	168	1,00	5,00	3,266	1,330
Job and Career-Related Obstacles	168	1,00	5,00	2,376	0,976
Threats and Harassment	168	1,00	5,00	2,777	1,330
Interference With Personal Lives	168	1,00	5,00	2,498	0,949
Loyalty for Workplace	168	1,00	5,00	3,613	1,237
<b>Organizational Trust</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>1,18</b>	<b>5,00</b>	<b>3,213</b>	<b>0,658</b>

Trust in Colleagues	168	1,00	5,00	3,609	0,989
Trust in the Management Team	168	1,00	5,00	3,282	1,392
Trust in the Workplace	168	1,00	5,00	2,590	1,241

Research results show that with  $\bar{X}=2.93$ , the participants' exposure level to the WPM at 58.6%. In this context, their 'Relationships with Coworkers' were neither completely good nor completely bad with the indicative value of  $\bar{X}=3.27$ . According to the analysis and the value of  $\bar{X}=2.38$ , they were not exposed to any 'Job and Career-Related Obstacles.' They may have been exposed to 'Threats and Harassment' at a moderate level with  $\bar{X}=2.78$  value. With the outcome of  $\bar{X}=2.50$ , it was determined that there was no 'Intervention in Their Personal Lives.' With  $\bar{X}=3.61$  value of 'Loyalty for Workplace,' we can claim that the participants were highly committed and loyal to their jobs. The subjects' 'Organizational Trust Levels' were also at a medium level with  $\bar{X}=3.21$  value. Accordingly, 'Trust in Their Colleagues' was at an acceptable level of  $\bar{X}=3.61$ , and 'Trust in Their Management Team' was at a moderate level with  $\bar{X}=3.28$  result.  $\bar{X}=2.59$  value, for 'Trust in the Workplace' reveals that the participants did not have enough trust in their organization.

#### 4.3. Findings on the Effect of Mobbing on Organizational Trust

In this part of the study, the effect of mobbing on organizational trust was analyzed both in general and in terms of its sub-dimensions. Table 5, displayed below, shows the simple linear regression analysis results performed on the data to determine the effect of mobbing on organizational trust.

**Table 5: The Effects of Mobbing on Organizational Trust**

Model	B	Std. Dev.	Beta	t	p
Sabit	5,668	0,091		62,621	<b>0,000*</b>
Mobbing	-0,839	0,030	-0,894	-27,881	<b>0,000*</b>
R	0,894				
R <sup>2</sup>	0,799				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,798				
Standard Deviation	0,296				
F	777,334				
					<b>0,000*</b>

Note: \*p<0,05

The model established for mobbing and trust was found to be significant with  $F=777.334$ ,  $p<0.05$ , and it was determined that mobbing affected trust in the organization by 79.8%. In other words, it can be said that a one-unit increase in mobbing reduces organizational trust by 0.839 units. According to this result, the hypothesis of 'H1: Mobbing has a significant effect on organizational trust' was accepted.

The effect of mobbing sub-dimensions on ‘Trust in Colleagues’ was measured by multiple regression analysis. The findings obtained from the calculations are depicted below in Table 6.

**Table 6: The Effect of Sub-Dimensions of Mobbing on Trust in Colleagues**

Model	B	Std. Dev.	$\beta$	t	p
Fixed	5,898	0,086		68,765	<b>0,000*</b>
Relationship with Coworkers	-0,017	0,010	-0,023	-1,797	0,074
Job and Career-Related Obstacles	-0,992	0,016	-0,979	-62,094	<b>0,000*</b>
Threats and Harassment	0,032	0,010	0,044	3,264	<b>0,001*</b>
Interference With Personal Lives	0,012	0,015	0,011	0,777	0,438
Loyalty for Workplace	0,002	0,012	0,002	0,132	0,895
R	0,985				
R <sup>2</sup>	0,970				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,969				
Standard Deviation	0,173				
F	1239,187				<b>0,000*</b>

Note: \*p<0,05

The model regarding mobbing sub-dimensions and ‘Trust in Colleagues’ was found to be significant at F=1239.187, and p<0.05. Mobbing sub-dimensions affect the ‘Trust in Colleagues’ by 96.9%. When the variables giving significant results in the model are examined, it can be seen that the job and career-related obstacles reduce ‘Trust in Colleagues’ by 0.992 units. From this result, it can be determined that ‘Threats and Harassment,’ increases ‘Trust in Colleagues’ slightly with the value of B = 0.032. According to this result, the hypothesis ‘H2: There is a significant relationship between the sub-dimensions of mobbing and the sub-dimensions of organizational trust’ was accepted.

The effect of mobbing sub-dimensions on the ‘Trust in the Management’ team was measured by multiple regression analysis, and the findings are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7: The Effect of Mobbing Sub-Dimensions on Trust in Management Team**

Model	B	Std. Dev.	$\beta$	t	p
Fixed	6,154	0,073		84,666	<b>0,000*</b>
Relationship with Coworkers	0,008	0,008	0,007	0,954	0,341
Job and Career-Related Obstacles	-0,004	0,014	-0,003	-0,300	0,765

Threats and Harassment	-1,044	0,008	-0,998	-24,031	<b>0,000*</b>
Interference With Personal Lives	-0,001	0,013	-0,001	-0,081	0,935
Loyalty for Workplace	0,004	0,010	0,004	0,428	0,669
R	0,995				
R <sup>2</sup>	0,989				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,989				
Standard Deviations	0,147				
F	3482,126				<b>0,000*</b>

Note: \*p<0,05

The model related to mobbing sub-dimensions and ‘Trust in the Management Team’ was found to be significant at F=3482.126, and p<0.05 value. Mobbing sub-dimensions affect the ‘Trust in the Management Team’ by 98.9%. When the variables giving significant results in the model are examined, it has been determined that ‘Threats and Harassment’ significantly reduce the ‘Trust in the Management Team’ at B=1.044.

The effect of sub-dimensions of mobbing on the ‘Trust in the Workplace’ was measured by multiple regression analysis, and presented below in Table 8.

**Table 8: The Effect of Mobbing Sub-Dimensions on Trust in the Organization**

Model	B	Std. Dev.	β	t	p
Fixed	5,635	0,114		49,253	<b>0,000*</b>
Relationship with Coworkers	-0,916	0,013	-0,981	-71,867	<b>0,000*</b>
Job and Career-Related Obstacles	-0,031	0,021	-0,024	-1,446	0,150
Threats and Harassment	-0,002	0,013	-0,002	-0,158	0,875
Interference With Personal Lives	0,018	0,020	0,014	0,871	0,385
Loyalty for Workplace	-0,005	0,016	-0,005	-0,293	0,770
R	0,983				
R <sup>2</sup>	0,966				
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0,965				
Standard Deviations	0,231				
F	1091,950				<b>0,000*</b>

Note: \*p<0,05

The model regarding the mobbing sub-dimensions and ‘Trust in the Workplace’ was found to be significant at the value of F=1091.950, and p<0.05. This reveals

that mobbing sub-dimensions affect the 'Trust in the Workplace' by 96.5%. When the variables giving significant results in the model are examined, it can be determined that poor relationships with colleagues reduce the 'Trust in the Workplace' by 0.916 units. According to this outcome, the hypothesis that 'Mobbing sub-dimensions have a significant and negative effect on 'Trust in the Organization' was accepted.

## 5. Conclusion

Despite the WBI's measurements of about 90% exposure to WPB in America (Namie, 2014; Namie, 2021), 79% in Türkiye (Aytac, Bozkurt, Bayram, Yildiz, Aytac, Sokullu Akinci, & Bilgel, 2011), 50% measurement exposure in the UK (Rayner & Hoel, 1997), 51% in India, and 17% in Germany (Zak, 2017), the mobbing activity in our study was determined to be at 58.6%. This level of mobbing activity compared to the national Turkish level of 79%, and 90% periodic mobbing rates of the USA is a really good outcome. Considering the small rural town setting of Karabük, its homogeneous ethnic composition, and the mobbing prevalence rate of some other European countries' rates, it is an alarming rate and requires urgent attention from the management team to rectify the mobbing problem. Having said that, the recommendation section stresses the need to repeat this research with larger sample groups, or countrywide surveys similar to Aytac et al (2011) and WBI polls to confirm this outcome with scientific certainty.

As stated above, the literature review confirms that different studies conducted in different countries come up with varying different mobbing rate outcomes. There are many variables such as country, industry, and the participants' minority or immigrant status as we saw in the cases of Illinois (Fox & Stallworth, 2005), and Finland (Bergbom, Vartia-Vaananen, & Kinnunen, 2015), the WPB rates may change depending on other variables which is not the focus of this study.

The literature review agrees that employees in high-trust organizations are 74% less stressed, 106% more energetic, 50% more productive, use 13% fewer sick days, 79% more engaged, 29% more satisfied and 40% less burnt out than their counterparts working in a low-trust organizational environment (Zak, 2017). This is why organizational trust is a very important factor that influences corporate profitability greatly, and why we wanted to measure Employees' organizational trust levels for our study. According to our results, the sample group had a medium level of trust in their company. This translates into employees having a medium level of stress, a medium level of energy, and 25% more productivity, using 7% fewer sick days, being 40% more engaged, 15% more satisfied, and 20% less burnt out than their low-trust organization employee counterparts. For the management team to obtain a maximum productivity level and maximum profitability, they need to increase employees' organizational trust levels to the highest attainable possible levels like high-trust organizations.

According to our calculations, workers trust their colleagues at an acceptable level, while they trust their manager at a moderate level. It turns out that they do not have enough trust in their employers. Again, to obtain the highest level of productivity and income, the management team and the organization need to work on these issues diligently. Lack of loyalty to organizations may cause higher rates of employee turnover and other adverse behaviors.

As a result of our analysis, it is determined that mobbing adversely affects ‘Trust in the Organization’ by 79.8%. While ‘Work and Career-Related Obstacles,’ which are among the sub-dimensions of mobbing in the research, reduce the ‘Trust in Colleagues’ at a higher rate, it has been determined that threats and harassment originating from their coworkers slightly increase ‘Trust in Their Colleagues.’ These findings agree with other studies reviewed in the literature section (Lawrance & Robinson, 2007; Zak, 2017; Akanni, Omisile & Oduaran 2018; Yusof, Imm & Zawawi 2019; Shukla & Kark, 2020; Abbasi & Ismail, 2022).

In our study, it was determined that the presence of threats and harassment significantly reduces the ‘Trust in the Management Team.’ The opposite is also true; increases in the trust levels for the management team eradicate or lessen the perception of mobbing and its effect on the employees. It is our findings that poor relationships with colleagues significantly reduce trust in the organization. This is why researchers such as Ludmila, Ron, and Caroline (2022), recommend a holistic relationship with employees, encompassing both professional and social dimensions.

This research shows that different sub-dimensions of mobbing affect different dimensions of organizational trust. Especially, problems in ‘Relationships with Colleagues’ significantly reduce ‘Trust in the Organization.’ This highlights how important ‘Trust Between Colleagues’ is for organizational trust levels. This is why some new age dynamic American companies like EY Global Limited Corporation, Deloit, KPMG, and similar consulting firms provide lunch hours and social activities on corporate premises to encourage coworkers' comraderies and bonding to boost corporate productivity and efficiency.

Along with Dr. Ludmila, and his coauthors, it is also our recommendation that a combination of systematic corporate-level involvement to combat bullying to create safer workplaces is a must to increase productivity and create socially functioning organizations. To stop overt bullying, it is recommended that training and improvement in non-violent communication methodology be encouraged by the organizations. To prevent ‘schemers’ and ‘instrumental bullying,’ it is advised to create transparent, fair, equitably allocated resources based on performance and other meritocratic systems. To ensure a fair and just system, organizations must create a check and balance and grievance committees to eradicate potential conflicts and ensure equity (Ludmila, Ron & Caroline, 2022).

### 5.1. Recommendations

Although the company chosen for our research is one of the largest in the Karabük province of Türkiye, compared to the national and international levels, it is a small or a mid-level corporation. The use of a larger manufacturing firm where the sample size would be greater than the medium-sized company that the researcher worked with, may create a more dependable and comprehensive result without any skew.

Similar studies can also be conducted in businesses in different sectors, in other countries that haven't explored mobbing issues yet, and with different ethnic groups to examine the long-term effects of mobbing and the effectiveness of different intervention methods.

The other recommendation would be conducting cross-comparative research between the manufacturing industry and the frequently researched industries like higher education and the healthcare industries. This would be helpful to distinguish which industries are more prone to mobbing and which ones are not. Since it would require so many man-hours and repetitive work to perform the same research on all industries, this study may be carried out by using already completed surveys like Gallup and other reputable organizations to do comparisons.

### 5.2. Limitations and Delimitations

The research had a gender demographic imbalance lacking an equal or close to an equal number of female participants with 6.5% female and 93.5% male distribution. This sampling skew was reflective of the industry and the organization's total population. The iron and steel industry, due to hard working conditions is heavily employed and dominated by male employees excluding the support and management staff. This imbalance and limitations were not due to any sampling error, or the researcher's preference, but reflective of the sample population demographic.

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**Ethics Statement:** The author declares that ethical rules have been followed in all preparation processes of this study. Approval was given for the study at the meeting of Karabük University Social And Human Sciences Research Ethics Board held on 26.09.2023. In case of a contrary situation regarding scientific ethics issues, all responsibility belongs to the authors of the study and Çankırı Karatekin University Journal of Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences has no responsibility.